

新機動戦記ガンダムW フローズン・ティアドロップ

THE NEW MOBILE REPORT GUNDAM W
Frozen Teardrop

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① Rondo of Redemption (Part.01)



Prologue File

MC-0022 Next Winter

I chased after Master Chang. Though terraforming the Borealis Sea was complete, the temperature was still minus twenty celsius. The extreme cold froze everything and a white storm raged outside. It wasn't really a blizzard because it wasn't really snow blowing but rather like the particles of the air itself had frozen, like small hailstones like diamond dust hurtling through space. Even now, as the hovercraft "Voyage" bounced wildly over the frozen ocean, that white dust beat the windows and all but obscured the view.

"Lieutenant Commander Kathy, we are five kilometers from the Preventer base, but it will take two more hours to arrive," announced Captain Tale Hicktory, who was steering the Voyage, with a grumble. Beside him, Ship Captain Masakazu Sakai stood glaring at the charts projected by the holographic monitors. Below the charts were the weather maps, changing occasionally. Judging from his slumped shoulders, the captain was irritated with the changes.

"We will arrive five minutes behind schedule. I never imagined the North Pole would ever be so tempestuous."

"Roger. My apologies for your trouble."

My own voice probably sounded like I was just muttering to myself. My lips quivered and my molars refused to unclench enough to let me speak properly, that's how cold it was. But this place had once hit ninety below zero, so I couldn't really complain. We had to hurry.

"We have to hurry."

We had to smother the ember smoldering on this planet immediately.

I am Lieutenant Commander Cathy Po. I belong to the Preventers, the secret information department reporting directly to the President of the United Earth Nations. Preventers, alias "The Extinguishers," was a special agency charged with the duty of maintaining peace on Earth and to eradicate weapons. The microchip memory file I had was sent to me by the President herself, Dorothy Catolonia. I already knew that chip would be the start of Operation Mythos. I immediately sent that announcement to the North Pole Preventers base, but Master Chang instructed me to bring three files downloaded from the old base from the history band of the United Earth Nations catalogues.

"You are a member of Preventers, and as such, must see those files yourself. Review them before your arrival," spoken in my commanding officer's typical cold voice. What use could that data from the last century possibly be? I spitefully thought, it was just so much meaningless data.

Those three files were dated from the summer of AC 195, Fall of AC 195, and Spring of AC 196. The language, the archivist, the location at which the files were saved, even the method in which they were saved all differed. The various relations and connections between them were few at best. In fact, the only thing the files did seem to have in common was the key phrase "Gundam Pilot." The brilliant pilots who flew the Gundam mobile suits made of Gundanium.

In the public history banks, their personal information was conspicuously absent, not even the Gundam names were recorded. They were referred to by an inorganic formal number starting with XXXG and after

that, they were sent to Earth where their legacy has been passed on by word of mouth.

No, it wouldn't be strange to call all that 'sealed history'; that public account left the impression of being unrelated to what actually happened.

In AC 195, the people of Earth's war had reached its most bitterly extreme point. The first file was written in the summer of that year. It was written in German and not so much as a journal or a biography, but the contents was more like a letter or a short essay. At the beginning, there was a quote from an old Austrian poet named Rainer Maria Rilke's poem called "Autumn." It was strange that a poem entitled "Autumn" should head a letter written in the summer. It was more strange that the final two lines of the poem had been written, and then been crossed out and that harbored some kind of deep meaning. What kind of meaning, I could not say, but I did know for a fact that the Gundam pilot named Milliardo Peacecraft had been active during the same period. I could also surmise that that file had been written by Treize Khushrenada. It read as follows:

AC 195

The leaves are falling
Falling
Like your distant self
Like the heavenly paradise is withering
Even as they deny it, the leaves fall
And every night by Earth's gravity
From the glittering starlight
To the silent darkness they fall.

We lose everything
These hands, too
Just look around you
Everything and anything falls
But there exists
with untold kindness
one who can catch the fall

R.M. Rilke "Autumn" AD 1902

This is my lifelong friend Milliardo Peacecraft

We exist in a time of desolate darkness. In the long history of man, no other period could ever be said to be as isolated, as sad and painful, as this one.

You could say it's like the Earth left alone in the vastness of space, or describe it like a lost child having nowhere to go.

At the end of the last century, mankind left the proverbial nest for space. Then, for the first time, we realized that we were alone. The basis for that statement comes from the closest heavenly body to the earth: the moon. It resides hundreds of thousands of kilometers away.

Orbiting between Earth and the moon there is habitable space- the space colonies. They were at once the new world and the symbol of the new era which we called AC, After Colony. Although nearly two hundred years have passed since, mankind has yet to shake off the dark era.

Now, power is concentrated in few hands and those hands are engaged in a virtually meaningless power struggle. While they pay lip service to upholding moral law, they embroil their people in war, demanding their poverty and hunger and bloodshed.

I can believe the reason we continue to live in darkness is because we flew the coop before we had wings. Or, from a different perspective, space, with its absolute existence that completely refuses life, was a physical or psychological cause of our torture by immature solitude.

Either way, for close to one hundred years, man has continued to wage war blindly, and the will to go to space has stagnated, time has stagnated. That stagnation has turned into sluggish decline. The current leaders have made big talk of using the war to somehow stay that downward slide.

Tears of grief run endlessly down the people's eyes. Have they already given up? There is no end to the fighting, to the struggling. To be sure, that itself is painfully obvious. If you look back at history.

And in throwing away any of our few paths to peace, to the extent that it wouldn't be bombastic to say we do so to main balance in our hearts, the uncommon will become the common and the inert war and chronic impoverished state will continue.

Even as the sun shines radiantly down upon the heads of men, they turn their gaze away from the dazzling brightness and are shut up in the shell of their little Earth-- as if they forgot the existence of the sun.

Is it not therefore necessary for a revolution? In these dark times, there must appear one who may shine a ray of light upon the path these men should follow. No matter how small the light, no matter how bloody the action, someone must take the child weary of tears by the hand and lead him to the right path.

That, however, must not be at the hands of the 'winners.'

The rule of the winners but leads to further power struggles and only serves to pull us back into a state of war. Those who will change history...
Must be the defeated.

Sommer T.K.

The word 'summer' was recorded in German and what with bearing the initials believed to stand for Treize Khushrenada-- T.K.-- and the special import placed upon the words 'the defeated,' there is reason to believe this was penned by Khushrenada himself. But... Treize and Milliardo did not have a point of contact at this time ((it's said that they first crossed paths during the Eve Wars)). However much they seem contemporaries, from a historical point of view, it is probably more accurate to contend that it is, in fact, someone else.

The next file, too, was enigmatic. The file wasn't text but rather a video. At the start of the new school term in September AC 195, a boy by the name of 'Duo Maxwell' had transferred to the State Gymnasium on the L-4 colony R09935. He was recorded reading a composition ((or, more accurately, it had the distinct feeling of an essay)) on the Earth-Colony relations. As it had been recorded by a camera situated at the very back of the classroom, there was no way the youth's face could be shown clearly, but if that was the real 'Duo Maxwell,' it would mean he was the only gundam pilot we could see in the flesh and blood. Mostly, according to the rumors precedent at the time, the pilots were young boys and in order to complete their missions, they often infiltrated schools and the like, and they repeatedly transferred schools. However, if that truly were the case, it seems like it would be impossible to use the name 'Duo.' If you want to conceal your identity, obviously, you would assume a fake name. This is what the video contained:

AC 195 Autumn

"Earth: the planet in our solar system that is miraculously able to support life. With the advent of the colonies, man had abundant resources and with cultivated technology it became possible to possess new land-- space. However, in the end, it cannot surpass Mother Earth. What was the meaning of creating the colonies, then? I've heard the main reason is to give Earth-bound men a more abundant life. I wonder if we didn't need this pseudo-space because we had an impossible demand for it. There were no predators and so it was safer than the Earth. The development never ceased and looked as if it promised eternal existence for the human race. Space allowed for a fresh start. It seemed like a merry time. But it's difficult to believe that the colonies... no, that people could forget the Earth. What did the technology used to develop the colonies give to Earth? The most sought after technology: military power. Destruction was something the human race could not throw away. Even now, the colonies still hold a militaristic disposition. Earth cannot be forgotten.

Earth has great beauty. The animal which possesses great power, whom we call 'man', has come to control the entire planet. In the greater scheme of things the existence of an animal is infinitesimal. That's after the fact. After all, the things humans think of do not and cannot be changed. It was useless for man to go to space.

Before reality, the ideal is nothing but a dream.

False living space.

False Pacifists.

Space claims more lives.

That is a sadness man cannot forget, and yet he cannot stop fighting. The spilled blood and fallen tears will serve as no more than decoration for a ceremony. Sometimes, war is the only way to move forward. All the faded big talk of fighting for the sake of peace were repeated time and again in the past; that was just a load of bullshit. For the sake of peace, the colonies bore arms. Just the same as Earth. Their will power seemed to grow in correlation to the amount of blood which was spilled."

The boy calling himself 'Duo' read up until that point when the teacher silenced him and indicated for him to go to the back to his seat in the very back. The report paper the boy was holding was recorded by the camera, and upon closer inspection, I realized there wasn't a single thing written on it. It was completely blank paper. He probably spoke his mind right there just as if he had been reading it. If that's the case, I could imagine how his thinking was critical of the trends of the time but he was so young-- I couldn't help but admire someone who could, at that age, have such a wide field of vision. Then, for just a split second, the

final page was revealed by a gust of wind, and there I confirmed several lines of a paragraph that appeared to be the conclusion of his report.

I tried to read that paragraph from the frame on screen, this is what was written:

"Then why does man fight? Perhaps fighting gives our existence significance. Those who fight feel a sense of fulfillment. And it's a fact that those who fight cannot see for their sins."

This is just my personal opinion, but I had the feeling that boy was not 'Duo Maxwell.' Couldn't he perhaps have piloted another gundam? It's unfortunate that there wasn't data to prove or disprove this idea but I was, for some reason, gripped by that thought and it wouldn't let go.

I had a sudden thought as the last file was downloading. That was because I was rather familiar with the person who had saved the file: Sally Po. That was my mother's name. It was AC 196 and my mother had been employed by the United Earth Sphere "Preventers." The details of her work weren't clear, as far as I could tell from the recorded voices, they were talking about security around the time my mother was serving as a guard for Relena Darlian, the vice Foreign Minister. Neither my mother's picture nor her voice were recorded. Nor could we tell who it was who was interviewing Relena Darlian. Either the interviewee was too important or the contents were too top secret, but for whatever reason, there was almost nothing but snow for the picture and only the voices could be heard. We didn't know where it had been recorded and like the other files, the exact date had not been noted. However, I could just barely make out that a rather elderly man was talking to Relena Darlian. In the file, Relena and the elderly man were speaking of "Heero Yuy"-- it was extremely confidential information that Heero Yuy was also a gundam pilot, but we in the Preventers were in the know. He was the boy with the code name of a legendary colony leader. That was the crux of the conversation in this file. As a supplement to this, in AC 196 Spring, it was a time of peace between the colonies and Earth and eight months before the Mariemaia uprising. The recording starts with the elderly man.

AC 196 SPRING

"We have two rather large sicknesses in our hearts. One is the cross-generational urge for revenge. The other is man's tendency to not look at each person individually, but rather to put a label on them"

"....."

"Surely your ideals have successfully, however temporarily, broken the chain of hatred which has extended over several centuries. However, the group advocating ideal pacifism cannot afford to show discord in any opinion."

"....."

"I think you know what that will lead to."

"....."

"I'm talking about him."

"... yes..."

I heard the old man's breath come as if he were laughing.

"He was the best. Exceeded expectations..... no matter what the barrier, he never knew how to give up."

"....."

"His name... yes, that was something I thought up."

"You mean Heero Yuy."

"Hm... pretty good for a bluff, isn't it."

"You've given Heero... I understand he's been given a new mission."

"Can I answer that question with one of my own?"

"... okay."

"Do you really believe you can achieve a perfect peace by throwing away weapons and writing off the soldiers?"

"As long as the concept of fighting remains in people's hearts, real peace is impossible, isn't it.....?"

"Has the human race actually come that far?"

"I think not, and it will be rough going from here as well."

I heard Relena sigh deeply.

"But, essentially, what people must turn their full power towards isn't an opposing enemy, I believe it's a firmly rooted hardship."

"So that's why there are plans for terra-forming on Mars."

"I'll thank you for not laughing. I sincerely believe that."

There was a sound of the old man swaying. It really seemed like he was really laughing.

"That's alright."

I heard the creak of a wooden chair being moved.

"About Heero's mission to destroy the as-yet incomplete colony sized bean canon that was designed for specifically for the purpose of destroying Earth... in the shadow of the peace you've constructed, a deterrent like Heero Yuy is constantly necessary."

"....."

"In any generation, in any place, that's-"

This file was top secret even among Preventers. If Master Chang had not given me special permission, I

wouldn't have been able to see it. At the time, there was no record of there being a colony sized beam cannon to be used to fire at the Earth. The boy code named Heero Yuy... his mission was probably to blow up that weapon, I think. When I think about the contents of the mission, it seems about the same as what present day Preventers are doing. It's strange the assignment was given to my mother but I suppose that might have been because the then-newly inaugurated organization hadn't actually been up and running. In addition to the voice recording, there was other data attached to the file. There was the Human Hibernation Frozen Capsule blue prints and the user's manual. The plans were signed only with "J" so I didn't know who might have made them. There was an off chance it was possible that it was the old man to whom Relena had been speaking. Of the three files, only that last one seemed to have a significant connection to the files ordered by President Catalonia. But no matter how you slice it, I just didn't think data this old was necessary information for this mission.

"Lieutenant Commander Kathy, my apologies for the delay," said Captain Hicktory as he eased up on the Voyage's thrusters. "We've arrived at the Preventer's Martian North Pole base. We managed to make our ETA."

"Thank you, that's a big help," Said Captain Sakai cordially. The white storm outside had passed. Like a frozen teardrop in the dim sky, Mars' second moon Dimos was shining on the other side of the rainbow colored Aurora Borealis.

Hurriedly, I dashed from the docking back to the base. Master Chang was working here all by himself. I cleared several layers of heavy security and after submitted to a DNA scan, I ran to the Branch Head's quarters. Mars only had one third of the gravity of Earth or the colonies. My stride were unexpectedly long and made for easy running. I opened the final door and there, in a deep navy blue Chinese style suit with a mandarin collar, Master Chang stood waiting for me.

"Well met."

"Master Chang, we've received permission to carry out Operation Mythos. Please awaken the Aurora Princess."

'Sleeping Beauty' was now sealed in the human hibernation frozen capsule. That was when I heard a noise behind me.

"You really look just like your mother."

I turned around in surprise. Standing there was a man in early middle age wearing a priest's smock and a boy with a long braid of hair. The voice belonged to the priest. I turned round on the spot, minding my pistol. "Who are you?" Tensely, I took aim. The man, however, didn't seem to sense any danger whatsoever. He was unperturbed, even as he looked down the barrel of my gun. I knew these were not your average blokes.

"You're Sally's daughter, aren't you" so saying, the priest and boy passed in front of me. Master Chang followed after. The boy glared at me sullenly, revealing his distaste of having a gun trained on him.

"How long you gonna keep me in your sights?" His gaze flashed with fearlessness. "..... you wanna die?"

I might have misheard, but that's what it sounded like he muttered.

"I'm Father Maxwell."

Conversely, the priest never let up on his affable smile. "I may run and hide, but I cannot lie... and this ray of sunshine is my son, Duo."

Instead of an introduction, the boy snorted disparagingly at me. Master Chang remained silent but motioned for me to lower the gun. I reluctantly obeyed. The boy lashed out immediately with his sharp tongue, "That's a load off, might even make it to a ripe old age now."

When I realized that smart-aleck kid's name was 'Duo Maxwell' I thought it had to be a terrible joke.

Whatever possessed his parents to name him after a gundam pilot? I thought.

"By the way, have you brought the three files?" Father Maxwell asked as if to remind me. "To awaken the 'Aurora Princess,' the three songs of the prelude are necessary."

End Prologue

Chapter 1

Treize File

Aurora Borealis... it's not produced by the planet itself, but rather by the planets of the solar system. The storm at Mars' North Pole had settled and the stars stretch out overhead. Once, the atmosphere was too thin to make the stars twinkle. Since the terraforming, the atmosphere has become more like Earth's and now, the stars do twinkle. But when the air is dead calm, that's when the Aurora Borealis comes. Before your eyes, a white curtain floats down. The thin, filmy light is like nothing so much as the hem of an angel's or god's cape. And when it flutters, shades of indigo, purple, green and even sometimes red bleed across the sky. That's Aurora Borealis. I'm aware that my description is somewhat cliché but be that as it may, that most excellent curtain of light is like a graceful and solemn circle dance.

Surprisingly, you can see the stars shining through all the fluttering. Tens of thousands of kilometers to the east, it changes into a curtain of deep green. It looks as though it might be hiding the stairway to heaven, like the stairs are hiding behind the billowing curtain of light. Watching this ever-changing curtain reminds me of the majestic beauty of nature and the mysteries of space. If it's this beautiful from Mars, I can only imagine how much more beautiful it would have been as seen from the North Pole of Earth.

End Treize File

There must be people who object to calling Sleeping Beauty 'Aurora.' The story tellers of old could have easily called her Thalia. But if the name of Operation Mythos was misappropriated from Tchaikovsky's most famous classical ballet, it stands to reason we'd also use 'Aurora.'

"For 'Aurora's Awakening,' there must be a three song prelude," Father said. In Tchaikovsky's ballet, the prologue is in four parts. I thought it might be missing one of those four parts so I decided to listen to it to be sure.

"So, that means..." I said, looking to Father and Master Chang with a displeased look on my face. "The old data files need a password or something and these files are needed to make the capsule work?"

"Exactly," said Master Chang. Not to me, but to the microchip that contained the converted data files that I

was holding. That was the only way Master Chang could look at me. As soon as I handed over the chip, he practically snatched it away to scan and check the contents. Master Chang opened up another program and turned on the holographic monitor in front of us; then, he entered the password. The password was the year and season in which the file was recorded.

"With this, we can start the defrosting systems of the capsule."

I couldn't help myself, it had been bothering me since Father Maxwell mentioned it and I had to toss out my how-many-parts-to-the-prologue question.

"But doesn't the prelude have four parts?"

"This boy is the fourth part," Master Chang said. He glanced at Father as the data loaded.

"My prelude is equal to any symphony."

I thought Father Maxwell seemed a little suspicious, what with being a priest, yet given to speaking with such bombast.

"The real problem is the condition Aurora will be in once he's out of stasis," Father Maxwell said concernedly.

He might be a little shady, but he was surprisingly likable.

"Successful awakenings from artificial hibernation have an 80% success rate, but I'm seeing some abnormalities in the neuron secretions of the hippocampus. Meaning there is a chance his memories have been wiped out completely."

"The old AC memories?"

"Well, yes."

"Hey, Father Crapswell," the boy called Duo butted in. "I couldn't give a rat's ass about that, tell me where my partner is."

"That is best left to Doktor T and Professor W."

I had heard both of those names before.

"Do you by any chance mean Snow White and The Warlock?"

"Duh! Who else?!"

"You don't mean this kid is going to pilot..."

"Ah, well... he's been trained to Aurora's level for the sake of the symphony."

So that's why he was named after the Gundam pilot Duo Maxwell. But as I thought about it... this little boy as a pilot... 'hard to believe' would have been putting it mildly.

"Equal? Screw that, I'm loads better than Aurora is. You don't know jack, Fat Max."

"It's my fault he's got such bad language. I raised him by myself after his mother died."

"Unfortunately," said Master Chang in a clipped voice as he glared at the holomonitor, "neither the 'Aurora Princess' and your son are the best choices for this mission."

"Well, we can't just leave him like that, now can we."

"....." Master Chang kept silent.

"Father, are you a Preventer, too?"

"No, no. I don't have nearly as much leisure time on my hands as Master Chang," he said with a grin. "Let's just say that we're old friends."

"Zero is the number of times I've ever considered you a friend."

"Hey now, are you or are you not the same guy who looked death in the eyes with me on that lunar base?"

"Hn. I would probably be able to breathe a little easier now if you'd actually bit the dust then."

"Says you, geez."

I had never seen Master Chang speak so much before. Father Maxwell was probably less of a good friend and more like bad company.

"The three files have been downloaded. All that's left are your files."

"Yup."

Father Maxwell tossed him the chip. Master Chang loaded it into the computer and downloaded the data.

"Are you going to download all that?"

"This is just the bare minimum."

If Duo or myself didn't intervene, those two would soon be going for the jugular. I wasn't normally one to pose stupid questions, but it was my responsibility to see this operation successfully accomplished. It was therefore in my best interest to go ahead and ask.

"This is probably a silly thing to ask, but this data is also from the AC era, correct?"

"Yes."

"Is AC 130 the earliest history on record?"

"Are you really going to upload all that old data into Aurora?"

"If Aurora wakes up now, the body will be as good as it was when he was first put into stasis, but it's entirely possible that the mind has 'reset,' leaving it no more advanced than a baby's." explained Master Chang

"What about checking that data?"

"Did you want to censor something?"

"That authority has been entrusted to President Catalonia."

"Huh, so Dorothy's gotten along pretty well then. I've never met her myself." .

And there was my proof that Father Maxwell was not a Preventer- to call the representative of the Earth sphere by her first name was unheard of.

"She's a brilliant broad... if Relena were at the helm, there wouldn't even be any Operation Mythos."

Even if he was a Preventer, there's no way he would ever call his commanding officer a 'broad.'

"Say what you will, I'll have a look at Father Maxwell's files all the same."

"Looks like it'll take some time."

"What?"

"It might be better to say you'll experience it rather than read it," Father Maxwell said, twirling a pair of sunglasses. I didn't know what he meant at first, but then I realized those sunglasses were actually the latest of virtual visors. It meant that the files had been recorded in 3D, and the contents of those files was sent straight to your brain as if you had experienced the events as a guest or onlooker.

"Aurora's mind was sophisticated. Can we really recreate it with just those files?"

Master Chang looked unsure.

"It's a risky bet... things might not go according to our expectations."

"So he might betray us, like he did before?"

"I can't deny that that is a possibility."

"It was pure luck this guy got to be Aurora... anyhow, it's a dangerous gamble we'd better make a bet we won't regret."

Father Maxwell gave me a little wink.

"Well, I'm pretty beat after looking at all this."

"Whatever... you're always like that."

"I don't need a Preventer like you to tell me that."

I copied Father Maxwell's microchip and checked the file in question. It showed up on the holomonitor as a list of years and names and was separated into several chapters.

"Father, what's this?"

"You could call it a history book, or even a biography. Either way, everything about the past was processed by a special program called 'ZERO' and put onto this chip."

"Why does it start from AC 130?"

"If we gave him memories for all human history, he'd turn into an omniscient megalomaniac or something. That's why we're only giving him recent history, so he doesn't go bad. What he needs isn't a history of Mars, but a history of After Colony."

I looked at Duo with sudden interest. Either he was bored stiff with our conversation, or in a huff because he was lying on the sofa in the back of the room. He had his back to us and his long braid hung limply all the way to the floor. For some reason, Father Maxwell looked nostalgically at Duo as he said:

"This isn't the tripe printed in history books, it's all the what we knew- the real behind the scenes stuff- that's

really important."

"However much ZERO figured out, we can't be sure your own subjectivity hasn't colored the files."

"And why should you be? In any event, I have tried to be as objective as possible."

"That's what I'm afraid of."

"Hey, I'm being modest here... or aren't you Easterners familiar with the concept?"

And they were fighting like a pair of five year olds.

I focused on the files. 'Treize Khushrenada' was the very first heading. Since it was just text, I could read it on the holomonitor. It was, however, completely different from my own image of Treize. This is how Treize is portrayed according to the Preventers:

Treize Khushrenada AC 171-195 Executive of Romefeller Foundation and unifying Commander in Chief of the secret society named "OZ." As his grandfather was commander in chief of Romefeller, Khushrenada was born into elite society. Moreover, he was extremely charismatic and by his excellent politics, collected many supporters and followers.

All his actions were backed up by his unique philosophy and aesthetic and the Treize & Lady Une Faction showed tremendous confidence in them. He was very aware of the sin of war and took it upon himself to memorize not only the number of casualties, but also the name of each and every person killed in the war.

Following the OZ coup de tat against the Alliance, Treize spoke out against Romefeller policies. That resulted in Treize losing his position for a time and he was put under house arrest for treason. After the death of Duke Dermail, he returned as the Commander in Chief of OZ.

Thereafter, he received the rank of Head of State from the Earth United Nation's Queen Relena and declared full war against Milliardo Peacecraft who was representing the colonial revolutionist group White Fang declared full war.

During the Eve Wars, Khushrenada challenged Peacecraft to a duel aboard Libra. Peacecraft refused and discharged Libra's big guns. As a result, Treize gave the order to commence the largest MS battle in history. The battle grew confused and Treize's final opponent was Gundam pilot 05. The battle was fierce, but ended in defeat for Treize whereupon he forfeit his life. He died at 24.

There aren't supposed to be any errors in that account. But those files of Father Maxwell's were unbefitting the uncommon hero. Surely he was a man of many mysteries. Why did he care about the fallen soldiers? When did he start memorizing the names of the dead and the number of casualties? When was his ideological and philosophical root severed and supplanted with a seed of pessimism? The answers were in those files. I borrowed Father's virtual visors and plugged them into the computer. I put on the visor and the word "ZERO" popped up on screen. The calculated history was input directly into my brain. It was AC 170; it started one year before Treize was born.

AC 170 WINTER

Two lovers stood under the Aurora Borealis: Ein and Angelina. In the most northern part of the North American continent, there was a city called Yellow Knife. The couple stood in a field of snow and admired the beauty of the Aurora Borealis. The gorgeously resplendent curtain of light twinkled on endlessly. Later, even the locals would admit it wasn't often you saw such a marvelous sight as was seen on that night. To call it the ultimate beauty of solar wind and magnetic fields wouldn't do it justice.

"Earth is beautiful from space... I thought it was the most beautiful thing," murmured a wide-eyed Ein. "But then I came to Earth and actually saw this world and it's fantastic; inundated with beauty."

"Ein..."

"Earth is beautiful... it's so beautiful, and yet..." Ein was troubled. Angelina guessed at his feelings.

"..."

Even though she understood what he wanted to say, she could offer him no words. On this beautiful Earth, ugly war would continue ceaselessly. And they were considering taking the war beyond the Aurora and out into space. Ein pushed his worries aside and smiled. He decided to express his feelings about something else that was beautiful.

"The Aurora is beautiful, but nothing holds a candle to you."

Angelina turned her eyes demurely downward at hearing his brazen admission.

"I'm not that pretty..."

Ein touched his fingers to her jaw and tipped her face to meet his.

"Don't look at me," he said, "look at the Aurora."

"What?"

"I want to see the light reflected in your eyes... nothing else could possibly surpass that in beauty."

They gazed into each other's eyes and then kissed passionately.

Ein Yuy was born in AC 150. He was the nephew of colonial Problem Conference Engine representative Heero Yuy. Heero Yuy placed much confidence in him and by the tender age of 20, Ein had been entrusted with bridging the gap between the colonies and Earth. The current trip Ein was making to Earth was for the sake of promoting peaceful negotiations with the Cinq Kingdom, a medical state, and the Romefeller Foundation.

Angelina was the sole daughter of Romefeller representative Duke Cinquante Khushrenada; she was born in AC 152. Her father doted upon her from a very early age and she lived a life free from want. She often attended ceremonies and parties that promoted relations between the colonies and Earth. No one could have foreseen the changes one of those mere parties would bring not only to her, but to all of mankind.

Ein and Angelina met at one of those parties on Earth. They fell in love at first sight and finally, after many a secret meetings, they managed to sneak away to the North Pole. It was unclear whether or not they actually intended to elope at the time, but Angelina's feelings were unshakeable after sharing the Aurora with Ein.

"No regrets?"

"You're leaving after all?"

"Yes."

"I love you, Ein."

"And I, you, Angelina. But there is work to be done."

"Then I am going to space, too."

Ein shook his head almost imperceptibly. There was no way the great house of Khushrenada would permit

their only daughter such an outrageous flight of fancy. Any more than Ein Yuy could part company with his uncle Heero and stay on Earth. In words, it was impossible. Reality was a bitter pill to swallow for both halves of the couple. Nonetheless, they were so distraught over their parting, they considered any and every conceivable method to prevent it, so earnestly did they love one another. In the end, however, Ein was forced to leave Angelina behind and return to space.

People who have known absolute beauty, however, reject living among what they would henceforth consider the polluted masses of humanity and are given to acting irrationally.

The first time Angelina went to space alone happened a month after she had stood in the snowy field watching the Aurora Borealis with Ein. He was on L-2 colony V08744 and attempting to prevail upon an anti-Alliance resistance group to give up at least military means of resistance. V08744 was, at the time, the most extreme of the anti-Alliance factions. Since it's construction in AC97, it was seething with malcontent and loathing at the squalid living conditions and ceaseless rioting brought on by a long reign of poverty. All that rage was pointed like a spearhead at the United Earth Alliance. Ein, however, had been successful in his persuasion. He had convinced the resistance of Heero Yuy's ideal: create equality for the Earth and the colonies both.

Heero Yuy's was a name destined to go down in the history books, but would it be for his legendary leadership and brilliant political skill or, from another perspective, because of his nephew Ein Yuy's quiet contributions of strengthening intercolonial relations?

After Ein successfully persuaded the resistance group, Angelina unexpectedly appeared before his eyes.

"Ein," she said, suddenly throwing herself into his arms and kissing him for the first time in a month. Eine spared but a thought for the onlookers, then without even considering the danger, embraced his greatest love.

"Angelina."

The couple got married on V087444 at the small Maxwell church. At the end of December AC 170 by some accounts, it was Christmas Day, the star crossed lovers, the most perfectly matched couple in all of space, became husband and wife. Among the attendees was Ein's uncle Heero Yuy, who gave a short speech of congratulations.

"May the future of these two be full of blessings. We the people of the colonies did not leave Earth to start a war, we came to love and to love one another. We would like you to think that space exists for the sake of love."

There are now no traces of the Maxwell church which should have stood to commemorate the couple for years to come. In AC 188 a group of anti-Alliance colonists staged a coup de tat. More than 240 people died when the church was burned to the ground. All the world over, the event has been referred to as the Maxwell Church Tragedy. If Heero or Ein had lived, if they had been on L-2, perhaps the tragedy could have been avoided. However, talk of how history could have been different, the would-haves and could-haves, is just so much wasted breath.

For the time being, though, Ein and Angelina started their life together on the colony. Their life was brimming with happiness. more than ever before, Ein served as Heero's right hand man, working vigorously to deepened intercolonial cooperation. Because of this, however, he and Angelina could not stay in one place long. Instead, they continuously shuttled around from one cheap hotel to the next. As Heero Yuy's tools of persuasion in colonial political activities were purity and integrity, he never once used money from his backers or campaign funds or personal wealth to support himself.

Also, the Cosmo Arma was hostile towards the colonies and feared Heero Yuy was scheming to unite all the colonies against earth. They were vacillating over whether or not to result to desperate measures and assassinate Heero Yuy. Likewise, Ein, too, was forced into more secluded political activities.

There was no reason Angelina, daughter of the plutocratic Khushrenada family, should have been satisfied with such a vagabond lifestyle. And yet, she continually asserted that, as long as she was with Ein, she was happy. And that was how she lived her life until the summer of AC 171 when she happened to meet Heero Yuy again.

AC 171 SUMMER

"It has been too long, Uncle Heero," said Angelina, who was pregnant with her first child.

"Hello, Angelina. You've grown even beautiful."

"How nice of you to say that... but your flattery is wasted."

"But Angelina, if you want a smooth birth, Earth is preferable to the colonies," Heero said as he stroked his bushy eyebrows as was his wont.

Angelina was surprised to hear Heero Yuy, visionary of the colonies, spouting hundred year old superstitions about the dangers of giving birth in space.

"There is no need to worry. The medical team from the Cinq Kingdom has already solved that problem. Today, there are no abnormalities of the womb caused by being in space." Families like the Winners were even conducting tests on DNA manipulated test tube babies.

"Of course there aren't. I was merely concerned for the baby's grandfather, Duke Cinquante Khushrenada."

"What about my father?"

"Since you came to space, he seems rather depressed. When he heard about the child, he became terribly worried, or so I gather."

There had been information about people employed by Khushrenada to bring Angelina back to Earth. It was hardly unusual for an old fashioned man such as Cinquant Khushrenada to fear the old superstitions about giving birth in space. Most people on Earth firmly believed that bearing children in space usually ended in death for both mother and child. That vicious fallacy was intentionally spread in order to prevent further loss of great minds to the space colonies.

"I could sound out Romefeller if you'd like..."

"Uncle, I am afraid I must decline your offer," Angelina said resolutely. "Our child has no connection whatsoever to the rest of the Khushrenadas."

"But Angelina..."

"Heero had spoken out of worry for Angelina, but his words fell on deaf ears.

"Please, uncle, do not worry about us. We will manage somehow." She then changed the subject by asking about something that had been bothering her, "What about you, uncle? Aren't you going to marry? I think it should be your lineage that carries the future of the colonies and the Earth."

"As long as there is someone who can continue my work, that is enough. Just so long as the name Heero Yuy doesn't fade from the history books."

And then, Heero foreshadowed the future:

"If something should happen to me, Ein will continue in my place. And..." he gently touched Angelina's

swollen stomach and a tender smile lifted his lips. "I'd be honored if this child might also."

"Of course."

That was the last conversation between Heero Yuy and Angelina Khushrenada.

Meanwhile, Ein was preparing for an interview with the colony's Cosmo Arma Major Septum. Little did Ein know that that meeting was not going to take place. He received a message flagged as "urgent."

"We've got a problem, Ein."

It was one of Angelina's guards. He said that Angelina had gone out to do some shopping when, from out of nowhere, she was surrounded by several men. They trundled her into a car that had pulled up and took off with her. Ein wasn't as angry at the guard's incompetence as much as he was angry at himself for never warning Angelina to be more careful and avoid going out.

"I'll bet it was them." Immediately, Ein suspected it had been the men Mr. Khushrenada had hired. How could it have been anyone else? It was the only thing that made sense. He never would have guessed they would use force to get Angelina back, but he had been careless to assume the Khushrenada's had come to accept the marriage of Angelina and Ein.

"I'm on my way," said Ein, even though he was at a loss for what to do. The colony's peace and order was managed by the Cosmo Arma and Ein was in no position to go off on a wild goose chase looking for Angelina when he was supposed to be meeting with Lt. Commander Septum. Conversely, the people of Earth would probably spin Ein's life with Angelina as abduction instead of marriage. All was lost. He was vacillating between going after her or letting her go. Then, he received another message to his cell phone. It said:

Sayonara.

When I think about how hard everything has been for you, I know this is the only thing I can do to make it better for you.

Angelina must have secretly sent that desperate email while her handlers weren't looking. It sounded just like her- always worrying about Ein before even giving a thought to herself.

"This isn't over."

Ein was irritated both at the dirty rotten Khushrenada tactics and his own weakness.

"You can't tear us apart that easily."

If he gave up now, he'd lose the most beautiful woman in all of space. Ein got in touch with his contact at the Resistance, Quinze. It was like setting a thief to catch a thief and Ein quickly learned that they were heading to the space port.

"I can still make it!" Ein said and jumped into his car and headed to the spaceport. He found out they were taking off from runway 13, which served as the Alliance's airstrip on that colony. When he arrived at the spaceport, he drove right through the chain link fence and came to a screeching halt right on the tarmac.

"ANGELINA!" Ein shouted at the top of his lungs.

"Ein!" said Angelina, seeing his figure from the shuttle window. He knew she couldn't hear, but wild horses couldn't have kept him from screaming. Tears streamed down his face. If only he had wings, he would fly to her side, but... he was only human.

Alliance soldiers had already surrounded Ein.

"Ein, you're causing a scene," said Major Septum as he stepped out from between the soldiers. He had a gun trained on Ein. "This area is under the jurisdiction of the Cosmo Arma. We have to ask that you, not being a member of our personnel, leave the premises."

Ein ignored Septum and walked calmly towards the shuttle.

"STOP!" Septum's voice echoed across runway 13. "If you refuse to follow my orders, I will be forced to shoot you."

But mere orders couldn't stop Ein.

"This isn't an idle threat. It would be to your disadvantage to cause anymore trouble." Septum tried conveying his point with words befitting a Major of the Alliance. Ein, however, was not intimidated and Septum pulled the trigger. The bullet hit him in the left shoulder.

"ANGELINA!" He screamed not for the pain of the bullet, but the pain of losing his beloved wife. Septum fired a second shot. That one hit and took a chunk out of his right calf, making it difficult to Ein to continue walking.

"ANGELINA!"

This time, he screamed for the pain also. He tried to keep moving forward, but listed terribly to the side. He collapsed, arms and legs splayed wide, right over the white 13 painted upon the tarmac.

"Ein!" Angelina's eyes burned with the sight of the man she loved lying crumpled on the runway, vivid red blood pooling over the number 13. "Ein Yuy. The man I love."

She wouldn't let herself cry.

I will not forget this. The man I love threw everything away and screamed my name.

Thought Angelina to herself even as she steeled her heart.

"I love you, Ein."

"An... ge... lina..."

Ein kept yelling even as his consciousness grew weak. Septum felt utter hatred; he felt the urge to kill.

There is only death for those who do not obey my orders. Thought Septum as he took aim at Ein's head. But somehow, the shuttle had found space in which to maneuver around them, started its engines, and slowly started moving. The soldiers fell back to the sides of the runway to make space for the shuttle. Septum lingered, but eventually, he was overpowered by the head of the exhaust and stepped back himself. Seconds later, the shuttle left.

Ein was taken into custody by the Peace Preservation Office on charges of unlawful entry into Alliance grounds and acts of treason.

"I will see Angelina again."

That was Ein's only wish. And after weeks of imprisonment, he was released and returned to his political activities for colonial cooperation. Ein did not cry any more; he would not allow himself.

"I'll break down the wall between the colonies and Earth. Then, I can be with Angelina again. Despite a vacuum and physical distance between us, why should there be any wall between people whose hearts are

aligned?" Ein had made up his mind.

However, the two were not to meet again. Indeed, a rather cruel twist of fate was awaiting them.

AC 171 AUTUMN

Three months later, Angelina gave birth to a boy in Luxembourg, Europe. She named him Treize. The name meant "thirteen," perhaps because she indeed could not forget the blood stained runway 13. For Angelina, the memory wasn't distasteful, it was the moment she saw with her own eyes what true love really meant.

Treize had Heero Yuy's bushy eyebrows, but his eyes were the spitting image of Ein. Whenever she looked at Treize's face, her heart was transported to space. His birth certificate bore the name "Treize Khushrenada" and there was no mention of his father.

Since before Treize could remember, Angelina and influential Romefeller member Demail Catalonia's son Hundert had been married. A magnificent ceremony had been held. With an age difference greater than twenty years, it stood to reason that there was no romantic love between the two. But Angelina was in no state to refuse a political union and accepted the proposition.

Her father, Count Cinquant, was aging. He was of the mind that his daughter's previous penchant for flight and impetuous behavior were gone. He thought the Khushrenada family welfare was now well taken care of with Angelina in a stable marriage and raising the Khushrenada heir.

That sense of security perhaps sent him to an early grave. The following year, in the early spring of AC 172, Romefeller representative Count Cinquant Khushrenada passed away. The future of the Foundation and the Khushrenada family fortune was left to the new born Treize. Until he came of age, Demail Catalonia assumed the leadership of Romefeller. Catalonia lacked Khushrenada's leadership and charisma and for several years, the Foundation was without a driving force.

Angelina, at the time, did not give up on life. She had found a purpose for her political marriage: instill the values of Ein in their son. That, she felt, would atone for her previous impudence.

Meanwhile, in space, Heero Yuy presented the "Total Colonial Unification Declaration." The people of space thought this would bring the colonies equality with Earth. Angelina, too, danced for joy when she heard the proclamation. There was great rejoicing at the taking of the first steps towards realizing a truly unified state of being. However, Earth was very cunning and seemed to believe this would only serve to facilitate further exploitation of the colonies. Proof of this was in the expansion of the Alliance's military bases in space and a sizable increase in the Alliance military maintenance expenses that were shouldered by the colonists. Furthermore, raising tariffs on intercolony exports was decided mainly on Earth's side and the colonies were pulled into one disadvantageous treaty after another. The people of the colonies thought of complaining, but they had no way of competing with Earth's Alliance military. Diplomacy without power wasn't just a castle in the air, it was down right wicked.

"All this is happening because your grandfather wouldn't let me and your father alone," Angelina said to little Treize. "If they want reform, they must take into account both the wishes of space and the ideas of Earth.

"That's something only you can do. That is the mission you must complete."

Hundert wasn't concerned to hear Angelina talking so, he simply smiled gently. It's unknown whether he didn't take her talk seriously or if he still respected Angelina's opinions at the time. He was generous and had no qualms if his beloved wife couldn't bring herself to love him back. He was also generous to Treize despite the child being of a different father and Hundert was affectionate towards him. Although fellow aristocrats called him a people pleaser and insensitive behind his back, Hundert paid them no mind. He had the last laugh when, two years later, Angelina gave birth to his child, a baby boy.

AC 173 SPRING

Angelina and Fundelt gave birth to a baby boy. They named him Van Khushrenada. He was two years younger than Treize. He had Angelina's features and everyone thought he was girl. He really was as beautiful as an angel come to Earth. Right down to his eyebrows so unlike Treize's own bushy ones. As he possessed both Khushrenada and Catalonia genes, Van was also more appropriate for both assuming the leadership of Romefeller when the time came and inheriting the family title. Hundert kept that little fact a secret from Angelina and Treize. Instead, he showered them with gratuitous affection so as to maintain their good graces. Naturally, the Foundation was pleased with the birth of Van and thought of it as a second coming for Cinquant. Years later, Treize himself would share the same opinion and bequeathed both the Khushrenada fortune and the Romefeller representative position to Van. He resolved himself to a life of military service. Young as Treize was, he was innocently happy at the birth of his charming little brother.

Around the same time, in space, Heero Yuy announced the colonies independence, to be secured by nonviolence and demilitarization. Needless to say, this was the formal Declaration of Space. This was the catalyst of Cinq Kingdom's decision to choose total pacifism and it would also be the source of Queen Relena's One World Declaration several years later.

Angelina watched Heero Yuy's address live with Treize and the new born Van. Her face, however, was steeped in worry and there were even tears in her eyes. How could tears, which were not supposed to exist for her anymore, be ready to spill down her face? On the monitor, she could see Ein standing beside Heero Yuy. The aftereffects of having been shot had left him walking with a cane and carrying himself in a painful looking posture. Nonetheless, he wasn't participating from behind the scenes anymore, he was taking action on stage. The sight filled Angelina with great pride. But when she saw among Heero's attendants the one-time anti-Alliance resistance leader Quinze and the wealthy Dekim Barton, who was rumored to have split colonial wealth in half, an unspeakable uneasiness encroached upon Angelina's heart like a dark shadow. The very Independence Proclamation itself was in extreme danger. The proclamation was essentially a complete rejection of the Alliance. Of course, it was welcomed with open arms by the colonies but for Heero and Ein, it was the equivalent of taking on the Alliance with their bare hands.

"They're going to be killed..."

Personally, Cosmo Arma General Septum hated Ein Yuy, but Heero Yuy was standing in a dangerous place himself. At that pace, the colonies were going to be robbed of their rights. Bearing that in mind, a sniper from the forerunner of the secret agency OZ, the Alliance's "Specials", surely could have been employed to take out Heero Yuy. The Specials were members of the Alliance headquarters, and there weren't any members of the Alliance forces in space with the authority to give the order. In the end, that 'request' was paid for from the space army's budget and the Cosmo Arma would accomplish that task. The man who received Septum's request was Odin Lowe. Note his name, as he will be discussed in more detail later.

AC 175 April 05

Four year old Treize distinctly remembered the events of this day. This is probably his earliest memory. Angelina had taken Treize and Van on a trip to the northern peninsula of Scandinavia. Hundert did not accompany them. Angelina was hoping to show her two sons the Aurora Borealis. There plans were to see the beautiful fjords by ship, then go by Norway Sea to Greenland where they could see the Aurora Borealis from a snowy field. However, the day before, there was a blizzard. In April, there are a lot of ice floes that float down from the Arctic Sea. Because of the storm, the enormous white floes were crashing into each other terribly. Some of them stayed afloat; some of them sunk below the surface. The rough white sea water looked like a battle field of grappling ice soldiers. The front edges were sharp and pointing and whenever two floes crashed into each other, they were each left looking even more knife-like. Treize remembered watching that scene from the ship and being strangely affected. That battle had no principles and no point. There was neither justice nor evil, neither friend nor foe. It was just an out and out exercise in futility. Rationally speaking, that scene could simply be put down to Mother Nature. Treize, however, saw that battle as a thing of beauty.

The storm blew over early the next morning and it was a brilliantly clear day. This was the time that Angelina first heard of the assassination of Heero Yuy. The three of them watched in astonishment as, on the TV monitor, the legendary revolutionary was shot and breathed his last on live TV. Angelina was at a loss for words. And, at the same time, a terrorist group blew up the venue and Ein Yuy was assumed dead. Angelina remained silent. We don't know if she was thinking 'It can't be...' or 'It's just as I feared: they've been killed.' But she did not scream or fall to pieces.

"History has started to get out of gear. This world is wrong," Angelina said as she stroked her children's cheeks.

At their mother's insistence, the two boys, Treize and Van, left their cabin and went to watch the ice floes. What they saw there was something they could never forget for as long as they lived. The corners of the ice floes, finely gouged and sharp and transparent, had blue sea water frozen inside that sparkled with the sunlight spilling over the horizon. Silver and gold and all the colors of the rainbow flashed from the floes floating like jewels in the water.

It was pure beauty, appearing after a meaningless battle with its perfectly sublime beauty.

"It's pretty, isn't it, Treize?"

"Yes."

"Boys, you should remember this view... it might come in handy sometime," said Angelina quietly from behind her sons.

"Mother..."

"Ein, I love you."

Angelina's lips met little Treize's. But it was not a mother kissing her son. She saw Ein's face on Treize and gave him a lover's kiss. For the first time in his life, Treize shed tears. He understood just how much pain his mother was experiencing. Young Van surely must have seen them, but he would never speak of it. Perhaps he didn't remember it. But it's not hard to imagine he felt something even if only deep in his heart. Treize Khushrenada did not cry again. He had, like his father and mother before him, refused to let himself do so.

**The world is changing.
The Earth is falling
The paradise of space is withering.**

This Treize wrote some twenty years later, quoting Rilke's poem "Autumn" in a composition. And before, in AC 187 also, he created an enduring complimentary piece. Perhaps he was thinking to connect that view of the ice floes to "Autumn" or to his own piece. Speaking of the floes, the day following the assassination, Angelina returned to Lunxemburg without seeing the Aurora Borealis as planned. Thereafter, she took to wearing mourning black, shutting herself in her rooms and never taking another trip. From then on, Treize and Van didn't encounter much in the way of emotion. Indeed, they didn't seem to register the majesty of nature or the mysteries of space.

By any estimate, April 7, AC 175 was a fateful day for Angelina, Treize, and Van. Of course, it went without saying that it would eventually end up changing the lot of every man, woman, and child on Earth. On that fateful day, however, they also happened to see a stunningly beautiful view from the ship. For Treize, at least, there could be little doubt that the sight had left him changed. The following composition was written in German and perhaps serves as a character reference for one Treize Khushrenada's sensibilities. It could be thought of as both a character study and a character reference for Treize Khushrenada:

"Dazzling Light"

I saw a point of light from across the dark
I ran towards the light
Nothing but mere running
Running like on possessed
And I kept running
It was just like coming out of a tunnel
I burst into a world of dazzling light
It was a world brimming with contentment

Is this what I was looking for?
Something that I sought?

No, it was not
I searched not for repose
I did not ask for this heart

I looked behind me
I passed by myself
There was the dark exit of the tunnel

I was not looking for results

We needed more progress

So it is
What I sought
It was in that black darkness
There was a meaning to my continued running

So I asked myself

Why?
Why continue to run?

AC 187 Sommer TK.

AC 176 AUTUMN

The assassination of Heero Yuy left an ugly scar, especially for the people most hoping for peace. The Alliance's Corsica weaponry development base factory in the Mediterranean was in the process of manufacturing human-shaped mechanical weaponry called 'mobile suits.' The suits were developed by five brilliant scientist-cum-technicians sent by the colonies. However, in the wake of Heero Yuy's assassination, the five scientists ceased all cooperation and fled. As a result, OZ's chief engineer Seis Clark and chief consulting engineer Tsubarov Bilmon took over the mobile suit project and reworked it into a low-cost, mass production plan. In August of that year, the first ground-battle use mobile suit prototypes, named LEO, rolled out and by the middle of October, battle-worthy suits were being sent out. At the same time, Tsubarov had improved the Trago's mid-range support and indirect offense systems and had them Tragos being mass produced by the end of the year. Likewise, Seis modified the ground-based LEO plans to construct a suit capable of flight and those started coming off the assembly line in April of the next year. It would not be an exaggeration to say all the prototypes from the first wave of what is known as the early days of mobile suits were completed during this time. This, in turn, led the Cinq Kingdom on the Scandinavian peninsula, which was a medical state, to turn away from that military course and instead acted upon the peaceful ideas upon which the kingdom was founded. Moreover, in space, colony L-5A00206 and elsewhere responded to

Alliance military meddling within the colonies by announcing their intent to rebel and drawing up serious plans of opposition. Seizing the opportunity, the military uprisings Heero and Ein had been repressing started to erupt all across the colonies. Of course, a better description might be 'unhooked play.' In response, the Alliance took more and more control of military affairs often in the name of keeping the peace. Under those conditions, hatred bred more hatred until it seemed like an iron curtain had fallen and that only portended useless war. Incidentally, this L-5A00206 colony was the location for the first mobile suit battle in history, but as it only tangentially relates to the heading of this chapter, discussion of it shall be postponed.

It was written earlier in this account that a man who has seen absolute beauty starts to regret a life among the filth mirrored masses of humanity and is at times given to rash behavior bordering on the insane. The same could be said for the beautiful word "peace." Those who have once tasted peace, even for the shortest of times, are gripped by feelings of uneasiness as soon as it is taken away from them. And as they scream out for its return, they become fighters hungry for blood and unmindful slaughtering fellow men in the name of regaining it. This has been observed time and again throughout the history of mankind.

Angelina Khushrenada also started acting strangely about this time. Since Ein's death, she lost her will to live and seemed to shut herself off from the world. Often, she could not sleep for nights on end. She cried even when she was not sad, and the subtleties of emotion faded from her beautiful face. Her words and actions became incoherent as did her increasing eccentricities. At times, she even stripped away her mourning clothes and took to going about her room in the nude.

To Treize, his beautiful, elegant, deeply refined mother was being eaten alive by a consumption. Surely it must have been difficult for Treize to watch her decline and he, powerless to help, and yet, not a single tear did he shed. Neither did he complain about Angelina's behavior.

"I am happy only that she is here," he said and no more was he doted upon by his mother. Likewise, Van took his cues from Treize's actions. Long ago, Angelina had told Van to do exactly that. For the boys, who were just five and three years old, their behavior was commendable.

The Khushrenada house was virtually deserted. This was because Hundert, who was supposed to be the head of the house, spent as little time as possible within it. He said he was extremely busy managing the Foundation, but both Treize and Van knew it for the evasion it was: he wanted to get away from Angelina. Perhaps if Hundert had devoted the time to nursing his wife, the sickness in her heart might not have gotten any worse.

Angelina was hospitalized in the royal Hospital in the Cinq Kingdom in an effort to improve her mental and emotional stability. Hundert explained to Treize that he chose Cinq because of its cutting edge facilities and practices, but in reality, he chose an out-of-country hospital in an effort to preserve face. Nevertheless, Treize and Van did not let the distance keep them from visiting her often, unlike Hundert who visited the hospital just once. That alone was enough to see there was no love between the married couple.

Hundert accompanied the boys to the Royal Hospital, but he opted to remain in the car. The lobby was thronging with people. Hundert would later find out that it was because the heir to the Peacecraft throne had been born. The prince was apparently named Milliard Peacecraft. Treize Khushrendada and Milliardo Peacecraft. Those two would later go on to form the OZ Specials and eventually, would be the instigators of total war between Earth and space. But of course, no one could predict then what fate had in store for them.

AC 180 APRIL 08

Four years had passed. Angelina still had not been discharged from the hospital. Treize was nine and Van was seven. As youngsters, both boys had excellent academic records and had the charisma to be the leaders of their classes. The main difference between them being Van's naturally weak body where as Treize did fencing and horseback riding and was an all-around sportsman. Each holiday day off, the pair of them made a point of visiting their mother in the hospital. Once, they had been walking down the quiet hospital halls and just before they entered their mother's room, Van had asked Treize a question that had been on his mind for quite sometime.

"Treize, do you love mother?"

Treize had no intention of evading his little brother's naive question, but neither could he manage an answer.

"Do you?"

"Of course I love her."

"Is that so... well, I suppose that's plenty, isn't it?" Treize said with a gentle smile. Van thought there was a hint of sadness to his brother's lips. Van did not ask that question ever again.

They entered the room and Angelina was staring absent-mindedly out the window. As usually, her eyes were void of any vitality; there was such despair in her life that it almost seemed as if she could not breath. The two of them told her about the events at school that had transpired that day and about their pet cat. Their topics were just trifles, but both of them- and most especially Van- reported them in earnest. As ever, Angelina mere nodded but whenever her eyes happened to meet Treize's, she never failed to say: "The world is yours. You will command space and Earth both." Treize was naturally not the type of child to honestly believe their words. Van, however, was different. He swallowed his mother's words hook-line-and-sinker and he believed his brother had been appointed with the task of bringing peace to space and Earth.

King Peacecraft's declaration of his country's total pacifism coincided with the birth of his daughter Princess Relena. A brief review of Cinq history demonstrates that the Scandinavian kingdom could not end any geopolitical dispute. Plainly stated, the word 'peace' was the most distant metaphor. Poor in natural resources and possessing only a very modest army, Cinq was oft pulled into disputes with its neighbors and the pitiable kingdom was subjected to big European nations' selfish desires. There was a time when they Cinq morphed into a great military state and started aggressions with other countries. That was an opportunity for armies the world over to attack Cinq, merciless and with out consideration, and turn the kingdom to dust. The people, nay, the country as a whole, was completely impoverished and yet, vast reparations were being demanded. It was King Peacecraft himself who met those repayments with determined resolution. He had, until then, poured the nation's military budget into the advancement of the medical field and in so doing, created the best medical facilities in the world. Moreover, the education system was changed to support the one in three citizens who intended to become doctors or nurses. The country became a top level contributor to the development of medical equipment and a sharp decrease in war casualties were among the achievements of King Peacecraft. In just a few short years, the reparations had been repaid in full. Afterwards, they had the cream of the crop of doctors and they were dispatched to areas where disputes had taken place and offered medial services free of charge. In so doing, they managed to divest their country of its former image as a military nuisance and they earned the trust of the world. Soon, other countries stopped trying to assault Cinq. It was as if the country itself had become a hospital. Any army that attacked a hospital would doubtlessly be criticized and no one was rash enough to start a dispute with Cinq- there was no meaning in doing so. Since that successful campaign, Cinq had, over time, developed a loud, strong national voice and didn't regret [using that voice] in an effort to eradicate war on Earth. Medical exports to the colonies also flourished and it was the medical staff of Cinq which solved the problem of giving birth in space. Later, Heero Yuy and King Peacecraft would have several meetings, but their connection did encounter come complications. However, with Heero Yuy's assassination in AC 175, Peacecraft lost a fellow advocate for peace and became the lone proponent of pacifism. He temporarily stopped peaceful activities in space and instead pushed for making peace on Earth. Few were the countries that approved of his actions, but he insisted on following that course. Additionally, that brought about his declaration of non-military, non-violent, anti-war Total Pacifism. That this would bring about the Cinq kingdom's greatest tragedy was something eleven year old Prince Milliard and new born Princess Relena could not possibly have known. Twelve months after the announcement, General Daigo Onegal of the United Earth Alliance attacked Cinq, believing the expansion of peaceful principles was dangerous. Cinq was utterly destroyed. King Peacecraft died in the battle and the two children's whereabouts were unknown. It was AC 182.

AC 183 WINTER

Treize's mother Angelina moved to a different hospital before the fall of Cinq. It is believed that Hundert made preparations for this after having received insider information from the Alliance. However, rather than a hospital in the dispute riddled Earth Union, she was taken to a colony in the L-1 cluster that specialized in medicine. L-1 was chosen most probably in an effort to keep Treize and Van- upon whom either or even both the Khushrenada and Romefeller Foundation pinned their hopes for the future- from seeing their ill mother.

According to Treize, it was not too difficult to get along with his stepfather, Hundert. The man was sympathetic when their mother wasn't around and continued to treat Treize well. Hundert's behavior was not as much a product of having developed kindred feelings from living together with the children but more a matter of his guilty conscious forcing him to act to make up for the years of neglect he had shown his family. Note, that a man who could survive vicious nobility should also possess a conscious to spur him to atone for his sins is truly a man of the highest echelons. Then, there was Van who loved and respected Treize. The boy seemed to have appointed himself the task of assisting his elder brother, the future commander-in-chief of Romefeller. However, as Treize grew from boy into adolescent, he had absolutely no interest in the Foundation or with the royal political fields and rejected his promised post at Romefeller. Instead, he enrolled in the United Earth Alliance military school. He was only twelve. He had done so most likely due to his disgust with the nobility's predisposition to exclusionary behavior and he decided to eschew all that to become a military man. One could easily also imagine that Treize felt some connection to the Heero Yuy and the Cinq kingdom in their final days and he understood that however sublime pacifism may be, those without power are easily crushed. Either way, in those sorrow filled eyes, he seemed to have discovered the value of his own life.

Treize was at the top of his classes in military school also. His teacher was a a Romefeller Colonel, rumored to be something of an odd fellow, named Chilia Catalonia. He was the youngest son of acting Romefeller representative Duke Dermail and Hundert Khushrenada's several-years-removed younger brother Chilia had a two year old daughter named Dorothy and she frequently played at the school. This little girl was distantly related to Treize, extremely bright, and possessed a striking smile.

The things she said often got a laugh out of the people around her, "When I grow up, I want to be Mr. Treize's wife!" She said that not because she wanted to make Treize laugh, but because she honestly believed it. She seemed to honestly wish Treize could have really been her brother and for his part, Treize doted upon her as if she truly were his little sister. Chilia also treated Treize as a brilliant student rather than just the nephew he actually was and paid him particular attention. Specifically, he was passionate about teaching Treize how to handle the latest mobile suits, battle tactics, and the theory of war tactics. The prevailing thought at the time was that mobile suits sat inactive in the battle field like a white elephant. Up until then, there had been no proof of the machines functioning effectively. Naturally, Treize seemed to agree that mobile suits had relatively little value as a weapon of warcraft. He was, however, prepared to make the acquaintance of someone who would blow that idea to pieces. That occurred when Professor Chilia took him on a field trip to the Alliance base in Corsica. Standing there quite unattended was the as-yet-uncompleted mobile suit Tallgeese.

Treize's first impression of the Tallgeese as not very favorable. First, there was the color. It had been painted camouflage as if to assert that it was indeed a military weapon. It looked like the Headless Horseman of old North American legend what with the head being held in the suit's own arms. And what were they thinking to name it "Tallgeese"? Though he could not imagine calling the suit something like "The Reaper" or "Miracle Maker." Of the scientists who developed the suit, one man, still on the base, was working as a technical advisor. Treize approached the extremely lackadaisical looking man wearing the Hawaiian shirt and sunglasses. The man was snoozing in a beach chair.

"My name is Trize Khushrenada. I have a question for the technical advisor."

The man in the sunglasses looked like he had no intention of answering as he made a show of presenting his back to Treize and loudly scratching his buttocks.

"I believe the machine would not work effectively on the battlefield."

While it was highly mobile, the armor was heavy enough to render it remarkably difficult to maneuver. It was not suitable for midrange support or breaking through enemy forces on the front line. Those areas were better left for the Aries with its improved mobility or a heavily armored Leo, and the Tragos offered sufficient indirect support.

"That's my humble opinion, but what is the technical advisor's opinion?"

The man- Howard, the technical advisor- snorted, but answered the question, albeit without bothering to look at Treize.

"That's what you would think if you put a mobile suit in a damn corps or a division." Treize failed to understand. How would it be used if not in a corps or a division?

"That machine, the Tallgeese, is meant to take on a thousand assailants at once, and to do it alone. Originally, mobile suits were supposed to be used to that effect." Finally, Treize understood the practical uses intended for the machine. In all the history of warfare, it is generally said that he who had the superior numbers almost certainly has victory. Even against the elite, if the enemy had greater firepower, they could crush the opposition and gain victory with little fighting. This was believed to be the best of plans. Nevertheless, the developers of the Tallgeese turned that conventional wisdom on its head and designed a mobile suit contrary to the accepted ideal. but... at best, the suit had just a single use and that did not seem very effective.

"Sounds exactly like the hero of a fairy tale," Treize thought skeptically.

A war machine that could decide the battle with a single shot.
A mobile fortress.

Even if such a thing truly existed in full working order, that there was not a pilot alive capable of manning it.

"Perhaps if I were the pilot.." Here, Treize's line of thought performed a complete 180 degree turn, "it would not be impossible."

Treize did not quit that line of thinking. It was at once characteristic of him and something the average man could not easily do. "What he battlefield needs is not a mass of less-than-perfect fighters, merely a single hero." Doubtlessly, that would lead to a reduction of fatalities and meaningless sacrifice. "This just might be the perfect weapon..."

"I have a request."

"Hm?" Howard asked Treize to repeat what he had murmured.

"I have a request for you," Treize said; his eyes sparkled. "Know that, in time, it will be I who pilots the Tallgeese."

"Oh?"

"But that camouflage needs to go. Isn't there a color more befitting this hero?"

"That's just what I thought... any ideas?"

"Something elegant."

"..."

"Paint it an elegant color."

Howard later painted the Tallgeese pristine white. However, it ended up being piloted by the man nicknamed the Lightning Count: Zechs Merquis. It was twelve years later when Treize saw the Tallgeese next, General Zechs Merquise having brought it to Luxembourg. At the time, Treize gave his impressions as if it was the first time he were seeing it.

"So that is the Tallgeese... I see it is not just another machine... there is nothing Zechs cannot handle."

Of course, Treize had not truly forgotten the Tallgeese. The problem lay in Lady Une. She had not fully understood all there was to know about OZ. To the unlearned Lady Une, Treize merely chose to not reveal his true self. Treize's habit of hiding his true intentions was acquired back when he was a cadet at the academy. It's possible the only one to whom he ever truly revealed himself to was Dorothy Catalonia. To everyone else, it was his custom to maintain some level of distance.

Treize did not consider, at the time, that mobile suits would be fighting or strategically used solo in battle. In later years, however, Treize worked on developing and producing mobile suits for practical battle and, under the OZ organization, the mobile suit unit called the "Specials" was created. Additionally, during the coup d'état Operation Day Break, it was Treize who developed the strategy whereby the United Earth Alliance's authority was usurped in a matter of days. That was considered his greatest achievement and if he hadn't, the very existence of mobile suit weaponry would have been in jeopardy. Tallgeese II and Tallgeese III were planned and completed in succession. Further, the plan ideas Howard spoke of reappeared in history's strongest mobile suit: the Gundam Epyon. It was none other than Treize who unleashed it upon the world.

MC-022 Next Winter

Suddenly, the warning buzzer went off. Surprised, I took off the virtual visor and lifted my head. The buzzer went off because Master Chang had started to run some equipment. Under the light of the spinning beacon that urged caution, a section of the wall in the back slid sideways. A gust of chilly air swept through the room and from that white void, the cryogenic capsule conveyed itself into the room. The light could be described as "solemn" or "sublime." It looked like a frozen teardrop. The fog started to thicken, but the capsule was revealed in its entirety. The outer capsule measured more than three meters in length and it was decorated beautifully as an angel with its wings wrapped around Sleeping Beauty, Princess Aurora. Aurora's face was that of a beautiful girl. The face was familiar, I thought, but I couldn't quite recall who the angel reminded me of.

"Awaken Princess Aurora," said Master Chang as he touched the control panel. With a beep, the beautiful, protective wings opened magnificently. The fog dissipated in the warm air of the room and I noticed within the Princess Aurora outer capsule, there was another vessel made of transparent materials. Countless numbers of water droplets covered it; they reflected the light from the beacon and the light in the room, refracting it and sending it shooting out a myriad of colors. It shone like the light of the Aurora Borealis. As did the water streaming off the capsule.

"Commence defrosting."

In Aurora's arms laid the true cryogenic capsule and it looked as if the princess held it within an eternally loving embrace.

"Now, all we do is wait..." Father Maxwell tapped my shoulder with relief. More droplets collected on the viewing window of the inner capsule that Princess Aurora held in her gentle arms. Before long, we were able to see the face of the person who had been frozen inside.

"Is it done already?" Duo asked from behind us. "That was pretty fast."

"Not, it's not done yet. Weren't you sleeping?"

"You were so boring, I couldn't even sleep."

"Settle down."

But without the virtual visor, I was torn between the Aurora Princess and the files on the holomonitor, looking at them in turns. I had the same feelings of boredom as Duo.

The person inside the capsule, it was a boy. He had the same name as a legendary colonial leader: Heero Yuy.

That boy was given that code name and he had continued the fight as a gundam pilot.

Chapter 2

Treize File 2

Through the viewing window of the frozen capsule [cryogenic chamber] I could clearly confirm the boy's face and was at something of a loss. I had seen him before somewhere. Suddenly, I realized were. He bore a remarkable resemblance to the boy going by the name "Duo Maxwell" from the 'AC 195 Autumn' file Master Chang had me prepare. Perhaps he didn't just look like him, on the contrary, in all likelihood, it was the very same boy. To avoid any confusion, I knew I had to confirm with Master Chang.

"I heard Princess Aurora was Heero Yuy but..."

"It's Heero Yuy."

"But in the video feed I saw just now..."

"It's not unthinkable that you'd get confused," said Father Maxwell with knitted brows. "When this guy transferred to the Colony Gymnasium, he took it upon himself to use my name."

Curiouser and curiouser.

"By 'this guy' you mean Heero Yuy?"

That would mean...

"Father, you're Duo Maxwell? The Gundam pilot?"

"Yup. Didn't I tell you?... By the way, so was Master Chang."

"Keep your big trap shut."

"No way!"

"A long time ago, he used to boldly introduce himself like this: My name is Chang Wufei."

I stared wide eyed and slack jawed, too stunned to speak. Three of the Gundam pilots from the sealed records from the Earth Sphere were standing right here, right now. I was trying to make sense of the sight before me. The boy in the capsule whom we were trying to waken was Heero Yuy. The strangely affable middle aged priest was Duo Maxwell. His saucy kid with the braid was also Duo Maxwell. And my forever grumpy superior, head of the Preventers Mars branch Master Chang, was Chang Wufei.

"Master Chang, why didn't you tell me?"

"It wasn't necessary," he said. His sour expression just got all the more sour. "I would have let you know if and when the time came."

"Even so..."

"By the way," Father Maxwell said again, bringing his face close and whispering, "he spoke just like that when he was an ankle biter, too."

I desperately tried to withstand this mind-blowing news. Even now, using that cold and distant manner of speaking was all well and good but that he should have been the same in his youth, he must have seemed overbearing. What kind of connection did my mother, Sally, have with Master Chang when she was working with him at the Preventers? I couldn't even imagine. Anyway, a young Master Chang probably makes an appearance in these files. There was a glimpse of the current Earth Sphere president Dorothy T. Catalonia, a.k.a. Neo-Titanium Girl, at two years old.

"Lt. Cathy, have you finished your examination of those files?"

"No, not yet."

"Hurry up... you know too little. At this rate, we'll have to take you off the team," Master Chang pointed out rightly. For the sake of executing Operation Mythos, I needed to know at least as much as the Aurora Princess was going to. I hurried to put on the virtual visor and continued viewing the files. Just a few seconds of watching history as a bystander was more than enough. The data movie that loaded after 'ZERO' appeared on the screen was from AC 185, two years after where the first file left off. Treize Khushrenada would be 14 years old.

AC 185 AUTUMN

Treize had a marvelous school record at military school. Strategic and tactical theory, as well as battle and combat techniques that would put mobile suits on the front lines, were mastered by Treize to the extent that he surpassed even Brigadier General Chilia he was promoted from Colonel the previous year when he Chilia was an instructor. In just two and a half years, he complete the entire course of study offered by the Alliance and he received top marks on the instructor qualification exam, garnering him teaching credentials. Brigadier General Chilia entrusted Treize with managing the newly established OZ training school situated at the Lake Victoria base in the heart of Africa. However this wasn't a demotion. In Europe, the old war veterans in the Alliance still threw their weight around as if they owned the place, so an instructor barely 14 years of age would only beget hostility. It is thought that Chilia predicted that result. Treize was assigned the first teaching post available and offered at Lake Victoria and there, he successfully demonstrated his brilliance. Selected students were taught the high skills and knowledge necessary to carry OZ's future. Their grades were more than a cut above the rest of the students' and they ranked among the highest echelons of the intelligentsia class. Of course, their military resourcefulness couldn't be inferred from their academic prowess or marks, but thereafter, if you look at the number of cadets taught by Treize that went on to become excellent mobile suit pilots in the OZ Specials, it is clear that Treize was an excellent instructor. However, his elder contemporaries regarded Treize with suspicion; after all, what could the young and practically inexperienced Treize possibly know about war? People said that being brilliant was all well and good, but would it translate in the ability to kill people? They sneered that even if he mastered tabletop drills with excellent performances, it did not mean he passes the muster. That was blatantly obvious. You cannot evaluate a thing if one does not have actual results. Particularly in the military discipline which had a strict hierarchy where there was abhorrence towards young officers that borders on jealousy. Consequently, Brigadier General Chilia Catalonia was the only one who could evaluate Treize at that point in time.

"Treize is a war genius," said five year old Dorothy.

"In the battle field, he is beautifully elegant. It seems almost like a dance- a waltz perhaps- and he goes on

to gracefully defeat his foes."

That was the norm for all of Treize's evaluations.

"Really?" said Dorothy with stars in her eyes.

"Yes, really."

"Wonderful! I want to see Mr. Treize fighting."

"No, Dorothy... the battlefield is no place for a child."

"But... isn't Mr. Treize still a child?"

"Yes, but that's different." Chilia was hard pressed to answer. Around that time, Dorothy started making remarks that cut to the chase and had developed a characteristic habit of giving people a hard time.

"Dorothy, you really like Treize, don't you?"

"Yes! Very much! But you must keep it a secret from grandpa. It shall be our little secret," she said with her typical charming smile.

At Lake Victoria, Treize was testing his trademark mobile suits with drills in efficient deployment used in actual battle.

A mobile suit's characteristic was its mobile performance and efficiency. At the time, however, the Alliance only made use of them as backing for foot soldiers and defense of their stationary bases.

Let us now look back at the history of those mobile weapons made in man's image which we call mobile suits.

Originally, a mobile suit was a manned apparatus intended to perform large scale construction work on space stations and for colony construction. They were excellent machines due to their interchangeable tools that allowed just one mobile suit to perform almost any construction task. It was the Anti-Alliance resistance, not the Alliance, who thought of converting the useful suits for use in the battlefield. The Alliance had oppressive weaponry that the Resistance had no hope of duplicating on a military level, so instead they were rather successful fighting back with the mobile suits' interchangeable drills, wrenches, and hammers. From then on, the man-shaped machines were called mobile suits and the Alliance, Especially the OZ technical officers, embarked on earnest development of them.

It was AC 175 when the project came to a halt when the five technicians responsible for the development of the Tallgeese led. However, Chief Engineer Seis Clark picked up where they left off and finished the base construction of the Tallgeese and successfully developed the Leo for mass production. At the same time, he also developed the Aries, a suit modified for flight and succeeded the Tallgeese's mobility. It is safe to say that this arrangement of abilities and care towards the mobile suits called for a particularly unique talent. Seis' youngest brother Trant had a unique attachment, a tenacity, for the "ZERO" system on board the Wing Zero gundam in AC 195. Apparently, "unique" runs in the veins of all technicians. Meanwhile, Engineer Tsubarov was excited by the "gun tower" and armaments of the Tallgeese and he developed the Tragos.

At the beginning of production, it was best to give each of the three types of mobile suits their own division.

Despite their production of mobile suits, the Alliance executives of the day thought nothing of how to practically employ the suits. They could not deviate from the previous century's military ideal of land-sea-air weaponry; each division and each unit to which mobile suits were assigned only ever served in the capacity of providing assistance. For this reason, people were inclined to look at mobile suits as useless things. Providing maintenance and defense on the front as their primary function did not in the least reflect what

Seis, Tsubarov and the other developers intended for the suits in the least. However, the thoughts and ideas of the aging Alliance executives were resolutely unchanging and the Alliance stagnated. As such, a kind of estrangement between the planned intent and the actual outcome began to occur.

Still, the "heavy equipment" Leo was used in multiple ways. The Tragos, which was used for indirect bombardment support, was only recognized as a moveable battery or portable gun. In reality, the Tragos' ease of movement made it difficult for immobile enemies to land a hit. Ergo, these highly mobile tanks were ipso facto better. Hence, the Tragos went to the front lines to see how they would fare as a tank would.

Obviously, they only needed a single test to know it was as dangerous as a nest of angry hornets. The new mobile suit Aries was incorporated into the airborne troops and were almost entirely devoted to diversionary tactics. Using them in the airborne troops time honored surprise attacks was difficult because the Aries' vast size made them stand out terribly.

Treize came to the conclusion that all of these uses were wrong. If one was to make tactical, strategic use of mobile suits, then he thought it was best to group Leos and Aries and Tragos in the same corps. This led to the establishment of the so-called Mobile Suit Corps.

The first stage of combat was sending the Aries for reconnaissance and analysis, and surprise attacks. They would unsettle the enemy's front line. The second stage of combat was giving the Aries' data to the Tragos and have them lay down protective fire for the Leos, which were the main attacking force, to charge. The third stage of battle was to focus all fire power upon the enemy's main forces and to keep firing until the enemy was surrounded. Doing so would ensure victory. This was the basic combat system for the newly designed MS Corps.

It is generally known that Napoleon Bonaparte, the hero of the Revolution, composed his cavalry of three types of fighters: light horsemen, heavy horsemen, and dragoons. With that strategy, he successfully overran several European countries. Similarly, the mad dictator Adolph Hitler established a tank corps modified to have improved mobility as an armored division that proved so effective, it made the very Earth quake. It could be interpreted that Treize borrowed these various methods and applied them to the MS Corps, but in that age, there was absolutely no one who put stock in that notion. It should be assumed that Treize devised the mixed corps by himself. Further, this strategy would allow a single MS Corps to have all three abilities possessed by the Tallgeese. A mixed corps was the obvious choice. There was no question that Treize hit upon that idea after seeing the Tallgeese at the Corsica base. However, for a mobile suit to survive a battle against the Tallgeese would have been difficult because of the Tallgeese's extreme efficiency. To demonstrate the full extent of its performance would require vast amounts of space.

Of course, there was the open sea, the planes of Malaysia, and the Sahara desert that could provide virtually unlimited open spaces, but with all the terrorism and revolts, most of the world was embroiled in some kind of local dispute. War, naval battles, decisive battles, they had all become the antiquated ideal of a long since passed era. Needless to say, disputes continued with organizations outside the countries after the Cold War had continued unbroken ever since the second half of the twentieth century and brought the Alliance elite's mentality to a standstill. The real problem was that there hadn't been absolute war since that time. In other words, in modern war where the idea that 'war' was an extension of a 'duel' was wholly refuted; rather than put importance upon hardware like new weaponry, a theory was established whereby software that use of a portable system was just as essential as the hardware. The reason Treize was called a genius was due to his having taken the dissimilar concept of war from the old days and successfully meshing it with the modern systematic theory and the incident that proved that occurred early the following year.

AC 186 WINTER

There was a revolt in the city of Mogadishu which lied in the eastern part of the African continent. The Earth Sphere Alliance had, at the time, trouble with European disputes and hence could not spare a single unit of its main forces - its land and air forces that is - to go immediately to Mogadishu. There was only their fleet of battleships in the Indian Ocean, but a blockade was the best they could do and that would not suffice to gain control of the rebellion's military power in the city. However, if they did not intervene, then it would allow the

rebels to cede from the union as an independent entity and form a provisional government.

The leaders of the Alliance Unification Headquarters held an urgent meeting and worried over how to handle the situation.

"If it's Lake Victoria, we can head out immediately," Brigadier General Chilia Catalonia started. "The Specials with their state-of-the-art mobile suits are at the base there."

"Don't be stupid. What can those children do?" Commander Venti voiced his opposition; he was the supreme commander of the ground forces.

"Children?" Said the boy who had been sent to the meeting to observe as proxy for Duke Demail of the Romefeller foundation. "Commander Venti, did you just say those children are powerless?"

"I didn't mean you, Master Van Khushrenada."

"Of course," Van just nodded. At the time, he was only 13 years old. However, the people around him acknowledged his superiority as the next representative of the Romefeller Foundation and it was said his statements were both clear and apt and razor sharp.

"Those whom you call 'children' here are called 'soldiers' on the battlefield. That is obvious even if you look at the condition of the European Anti-Alliance forces."

"That may be..."

"And isn't it the reason the Alliance land forces cannot move, because of those 'soldiers' you call 'children' are being held up by the rebels?"

Commander Venti kept his mouth shut. Anything else he might say would expose his incompetence.

"But Master Van, there are only trainees at Lake Victoria and all of them have absolutely no experience in actual battle," Venti admonished Van and Chilia with that polite objection. "This situation in Mogadishu will not be taken care of with mere play," Venti added without thinking.

Van chuckled and said, "I take it that by 'play' you mean 'sports'? In the later part of the Anno Dominae history, the war historian Krefeld wrote in The Changes of War that war is not an extension of the government or politics, but rather more closely a kind of sport."

Like Treize, Van also was well versed in the history of war and theoretical strategy.

"Of course, you may protest me, but if you are in agreement with Krefeld, then you have no grounds for objection." He looked at Venti who was coughing and looking for all the world as if he had no intention of addressing Van again; he Van turned his attention to Noventa.

"No soldier starts his career with actual war experience by default.... General Noventa, even you must have had a first battle," said Van. He was pushing for his esteemed brother to be permitted to take his very first campaign. "By sending the Specials to Mogadishu, the potential of the mobile suit corps be ascertained and I believe we could not hope for a more appropriate venue for doing so."

"I second Mr. Van's opinion. He is my most excellent pupil and if it's Special Commander Treize Khushrenada, he will surely accomplish the task."

"If you say so, then we shall permit the OZ Specials to attack Sally... however,"

Van interrupted Noventa, "There is no need to fear, myself and uncle Chilia shall assume full responsibility."

From then on, Van was not merely an observe, he became one of the main speakers at the Alliance Unity Military meetings.

"Fine, let's see what this corps of toys can do," Venti said sarcastically.

"Let us then show you what these 'toys' can do," said Van as he looked fearlessly at a general decades older than himself as if he could pierce him through with just his eyes. He was a child prodigy who could be described in speech, knowledge, and manner as being diabolical. They immediately gave Treize at Lake Victoria the order to attack.

"Affirmative," Treize said with this face full of confidence. Chilia's worried face appeared on the monitor and he spoke his heart, "Treize, be careful."

"I am not educating my students to over do it. We shall obtain victory by taking the proper action."

"For the time being, I've told the Alliance Marina to prepare for your potential request for assistance."

"Please inform them that that will not be necessary... we can manage everything on our own."

"Brother," Van stepped up to the monitor, "The dignitaries here have ridiculed the mobile suit corps as being a corps of toys."

"Really? That's hitting a little below the belt."

"Please show them what kind of results are typical of your corps."

"Van Khushrenada, we'll put up a good fight in order to live up to your high expectations."

"I won't wish you luck, you are certain to win."

Treize nodded slightly with a smile playing about his lips.

At once, Treize selected five cadets: Zechs Merquis 10, Lucretia Noin 10, Izumi Tarnoff 14, Solac Delbruck 12, and Elv Honneger 13. Each of them had only just barely cleared the double digits in age but they were at the top of their classes and had excellent performances during their mobile suit battle simulations.

According to the records, Treize Khushrenada and Zechs Merquise's first sortie was in AC 191 (JAP point rebel control). That, however, was not the truth. The reason for this will become clear in due time, but now is not that time.

Treize pulled up a map of Mogadishu on the monitor and explained the operation as he used a simulator to show the corps' moves.

"Today with the setting sun at 1800 hours, we will carry out the operation. Cadet Zechs and I will take Aries. Cadets Lucretia and Izumi will provide indirect backup in the Tragos. Once we announce the exact position, focus all your fire power on that point."

"Full power... if we do that, there's a chance Professor Treize and Zechs will be hit," Cadet Izumi smartly mentioned the possibility of being unable to evade the first.

"We won't be hit," stated Cadet Zechs firmly. "We'll dodge. Don't worry about us, just pump the lead."

"Roger. I shall give no quarter."

It was Lucretia who was first to consent. Treize smiled and continued the explanation.

"Cadets Solac and Elv will break through the enemy front line in Leos, concentrate your fire on the enemy's head quarter's main forces. We'll be your back up so you needn't worry [who's got your back]."

"Yes, Sir!" acknowledged the dauntless, resolute pair with youthful energy.

"Now, the rebels have been notified of the time of our attack. This is for the sake of keeping civilians from being involved in the battle. Also, you shall not attack any one who is nonresistant, even if they are a rebel. Furthermore, since we are using mobile suits, I do not permit any bloodshed in the name of self defense! You will keep these things in mind."

Then, the youthful general Treize encourage the young pilots off to a good start by saying, "This operation will be decided in an instant! There is not a single element of defeat among us. We will show them the true power of this corps of 'toys'."

Twilight, Mogadishu. The city had been turned into a fortress. The rebel soldiers who had taken control of the city thought of nothing but strict caution against the coming attack. The light of several searchlights lit up the dark night left and right and sensing and spotting anything that came near, and they had installed heavy machine guns to shoot down and destroy.

The OZ aircraft carrier flew over the cit, maintaining an altitude high enough to ensure their thrusters weren't heard. There were two white Aries in the hangar. At the time, Treize had had all the Specials machines painted white. He would, in later battles, unfailingly have all his mobile suits painted white. White Leos, White Tragos and so on, he had a unique peculiarity for the color white. That continued until he at last boarded the Tallgeese II. Again, in AC 196, the Mariemaia army, proclaiming itself the successor charged with carrying out Treize's final wishes, also had its main forces painted white: the mobile suit Serpent: white snake. It's rather hard to imagine that a mobile suit should be white. The color just stood out far too much. It was like hanging a target upon our neck and shouting "I'm over here!" to the enemy. Some thought he was bringing back the spirit of chivalry. Others commented that it the white revealed his excessive confidence. Treize never clearly explained the reason for the white. Perhaps it was that the image of those icebergs had been seared into his mind.

"Let's go, Zechs....."

"Yes, sir....."

The two of them were already in the cockpits of their Aries. Then, Cadet Izumi, who was running indirect support contacted them.

"Professor Treize, aren't you going to sprinkle some anti-radar chaff?"

"There's no need... we will challenge them to a fair and square fight."

"Fair and square?" Zechs thought deeply skeptically about that.

"Is that what fighting is supposed to be?"

"A soldier must not hesitate..... the first step must always be taken with composure."

The hatch at the back of the aircraft carrier opened. Treize's suit slid out and descended freely without firing the burners.

"That is the path of glory!"

Zechs' suit followed after Treize's.

"That's also a path covered in blood!"

The white Aries fell from the sky. Treize's and Zechs' courses regarding the nature of warfare had already begun to differ at this time. Their mobile suits were falling on the same path, but their minds were going in opposite directions. As they listened to the wind screaming by, both of them checked the whole of Mogadishu as it approached before their eyes.

Years later, Zechs Merquise would return to Mogadishu for another surprise attack. AC 195 after the collapse of the Alliance following Operation Day Break, the remnants of the Alliance holed up in a fortress in Mogadishu. It was the OZ 33rd independent corps on the Somalia front that beat them. Zechs was one of the soldiers in the Somalia Corps and it was there that he first saw the Tallgeese.

The two free-falling Aries were detected by the enemy's control room.

"We've picked up two objects falling! They're directly above the city, altitude 10,000 meters!"

No one could imagine that a bomb had been dropped. However, as soon as they opened anti-aircraft fire, the free-falling stars made an about-face with a terrible thundering roar. The Aries fired up the jet burners and they simultaneously shot out, one to the left and one to the right. The anti-aircraft guns had no hope of following. Treize's suit followed the outer perimeter of the city and destroyed one enemy gun tower after the other. Inside, Zechs suit flew above the heart of the city, confirmed the location of the enemy's headquarters and chief bunker and relayed the information to Lucretia and Izumi. At about the same time, countless long distance shells were launched from the white Tragos. The firing was precise. Neither Zechs' nor Treize's suits suffered any hits. But then, the senses of both were superhuman, they immediately sensed incoming fire and, needless to say, quickly avoided it. After all, that was what the sixth sense was for the explosive noise, the howling wind, a moment of stillness, the staleness of the air, the shaking of the Earth, the rustling of the trees; all of this they felt; the evasion and the battle took place simultaneously. In the tension of the battlefield, man's five sense are sharpened. And that held all the more true for youthful boys like the Specialists. What Treize called "hesitation" became "cowardice" and ultimately, danger would be unavoidable.

Placing himself between life and death, and when he ascertained the exact target, that single point lit up with a highly precise hit.

The fire from the white Tragos exploded around the city and everything was enveloped in dust and smoke. The two Leos had broken through the city walls and entered the heart of the city. The acme of confusion befell the resistance's forces. Even as they tried to return fire, nearly all their weapons had been broken. The Leos Solac and Elv were piloting arrived at the central headquarters without much effort and with almost no resistance from the rebels. For the unarmed people, the appearance of these giant white godlike weapons was only associated with fear. When the Tragos, which had been running clean up, came hovering into the city, the resistance raised the white flag. The battle had been decided in that exact instant.

A communications officer entered the conference room at the Alliance Unification Headquarters. He said there was a notice of the military situation in Mogadishu. Lieutenant Commander Venti looked at his watch; his expression said See, those toys couldn't handle it.

"Just as I expected, the mobile suit unit alone could not handle the situation. You'll be requesting reinforcements, I suppose?"

"Negative, we have accomplished the mission to capture Mogadishu. The mission is all over. Damage to allies: zero! Enemy casualties: zero! Civilian casualties: zero! The entire rebel army has surrendered.

"Wha-!?" Venit stood without thinking. As if such a ridiculous thing is even possible, he seemed to want to say.

"What about the mobile suit unit's fighting power?" General Noventa calmly said.

"I estimate there were roughly 60 mobile suits at least to have brought us this gain- were there that many

mobile suits at Lake Victoria?"

With a satisfied smile, Van said, "According to Professor Treize Khushrenada's report, it appears he had a small unit of just 6 mobile suits. Ergo, there were naturally six 'children' piloting those suits."

"But... every one of them had, up until that point, no experience in actual battle," Brigadier General Chilia said with satisfaction.

Treize and Zechs got out of their respective Aries and stood on Mogadishu soil.

A breeze blew in from the Indian Ocean; it carried a hint of winter despite being so close to the equator. The sun was peeking over the horizon.

"Dawn..."

"Yes."

"Do you suppose we should welcome it?"

"If this is the start of a new chapter in the book of warfare," Zechs said as he looked up at the white machine, "then I cannot welcome it,"

The other pilots got out of their Leos and Tragos.

"Hm... Now that I'm thinking about the cadets, we just might have won a touch too thoroughly."

"Hm. Not you, Zechs," said Treize, looking intently at Zechs.

"You are my friend, Milliardo."

Zechs shuddered. Four years ago, he had assumed a new identity and swore revenge upon the Alliance He had thought no one had noticed. That he was Prince Milliardo Peacecraft of the fallen Cinq Kingdom.

"And how long have you known?"

"Last year, when you came to Lake Victoria."

"How?"

"How indeed..... perhaps it was because you were so young to have the tears frozen upon your young features."

It was true that Zechs had not shed a tear in the four years since The Event.

"What about you, are you cut from the same cloth, Professor Treize?"

He did not answer the question. Treize could not sympathize with revenge.

"No, if anything..." he looked at the four approaching cadets, "my heart is probably closer to poor Lucretia Noin's," he said.

"Lucretia..."

All the other cadets were smiling with pride over their victory; there were tears only in Lucretia's eyes. Perplexed, Zechs asked, "What happened? Did you get hurt?"

"No, it's not that."

"You were just worried about Professor Treize and Zechs, they're fine! Shouldn't you be relieved?" the always cheerful Solac chimed in, half teasing.

"It's not that either, I..." Lucretia wiped away her tears and said with resolute pride in her voice, "I hate war."

Afterwards, Mogadishu was an important base connecting Eurasia and Africa. They erected a mighty fortress and set up an enormous laser canon crowned with Noventa's name, the Noventa Canon. In the eyes of the upper echelons of the Alliance, who did not want to concede the OZ Specials achievements, their attitude- which bordered on harassment- came to light.

Nevertheless, the Specials', with their so-called "toy soldiers," first foray had effected revolution in the Alliance command system including regulations regarding mobile suit usage, and all logistical support and communications.

You might say it was too successful. It is understood that what Treize and Zechs had called the "beginning of a new chapter in the book of warfare" was related to this success.

AC 186 SPRING

Following the capture of Mogadishu, naturally the higher ups in the Alliance set a course for the mobile suits that primarily employed them as a means to protect the lives of the soldiers on the front lines. However, behind enemy lines at the resistance, they, too, jumped at the mobile suits and in the space of a few months, mobile suits could be seen at battlefields the world over. And as the demand for mobile suits grew by leaps and bounds, Romefeller amassed a fortune. Romefeller controlled and ran the "Ocean of Storms," the Marius Plant. The cutting-edge factory made various new weapons and small-scale fusion reactors possible. Of course, the Leo, Aries, and Tragos mobile suits were also manufactured there. While the mobile suit battle went on, the Marius Plant continuously churned out mobile suits. Even so, the orders didn't cease, but rather steadily increased. Moreover, production of new model mobile suits was sped up. The Marina wanted a mobile suit designed for underwater battle, the Pisces, and the space forces wanted the Leo II, aka Chimera, to be quickly produced in order to guard convoys.

By the calculations, the Alliance mobile suits should have been finished even if the factor hadn't operated until then. However, there was a traitor in the Alliance, there was someone within the Alliance who was sympathetic to the rebels and an out right traitor who sold vast quantities of mobile suits to the rebels on the black market. Also, acts of piracy occurred frequently where a ship carrying several hundred mobile suits would be attacked by a single Chimera and the entire shipment would fall into the hands of the rebels. Because of that, there was still a shortage of mobile suits despite the Marius Plant running 24/7/365. The Lunar plant was expanded in area and scale to increase production.

At the time, it was likely Earth's economy was wholly centered on the manufacturing of mobile suits and Romefeller certainly amassed an astounding fortune. Within the foundation, the Khushrenada brothers were conferred high value for their distinguishing services. Especially the younger Van, who, for the sake of improving the lunar plant's production efficiency, implemented automatization, shorter work hours, and a large increase in personnel shifts, all to increase profits.

Because of this, Van Khushrenada was only at the tender age of 13 when he was elevated into the heart of the foundation.

In the 'subtly' named rank of deputy director to the acting representative [Dermail], Van put the foundation's overwhelming financial power on the back burner and increased their political friends. He removed those who were unable to look beyond the old foundation style; and he purged the old customs and vested interests of the nobility. He also denounced dirty politics and corruption.

Around this time, Hundert- head of the Khushrenada household at the time- had already retired, but the

nobility which had suffered hardships because of Van's policies came often to petition him. "We were friends, once, weren't we?" They would say. Van, however, paid no heed whatsoever to what Hundert had to say; his words were entirely without meaning to him. As for Hundert, he also bore no affection for the condescending nobility. Nonetheless, the petitioners continued to come, Hundert became troublesome about every last little thing; and he took everything from Van and Treize and escaped to a medical colony in the L-1 cluster. There, there was a special facility for the aged; also his wife Angelina was receiving treatment at the same hospital in a different section, but Hundert did not once go to see her.

Van Khushrenada effected similar reforms in the Alliance Headquarters as he had in the Foundation. He removed the old soldiers who were often ridiculed for being steeped in senility. For the supreme commander of the Alliance, he installed Kyrie Catalonia as a general; and for the OZ Specials, in battle he awarded them the privilege of independent action at any time and for any reason Kyrie who held the post of commander in chief of the Specials but essentially, it is thought that Treize Khushrenada fulfilled that capacity.

If you think of this as "pure potential" instead of "harvesting fruit to green to be picked" then this was the only time where Van Khushrenada could have made all those decisive reforms. Van distributed the wealth of the foundation very nearly equally and this made for more powerful cooperation within Romefeller. However, Treize's enrollment in OZ was special. Vast operating capital was given to OZ from the Foundation. They OZ were undoubtedly the ones who could use the mobile suits with profitable results and no one could complain about the economic benefits made possible by the use of mobile suits.

During those six months, Van's reforms stayed on track for the most part. Of course, some opposed the change and said Van was taking it too fast. By this time, however, the Khushrenada family had vast power within the Romefeller Foundation. There was a thorough-going system whereby objectioners immediately found themselves in a minority faction and regardless of social standing, if it was someone spoke out against Romefeller, they ultimately either received a sinecure or were driven out of the Foundation.

Why did Van continue this out and out reform? At the time, no one understood the deeper meaning.

Similarly, Treize completed his own system reforms within OZ. With the mobile suits now joining the fighting, the Alliance's overwhelming military power was quite firm. Treize's suggestion of tactical level mobile suit use permeated OZ and or the Alliance and nearly all disputed and internal conflicts were concluded with much the same results as his first battle. However, the Rebellion was also establishing a mobile suit corps and when facing other mobile suits, it was increasingly difficult to fight with the diverse tactics. Treize would, in those situations, devise a new strategy and give new instructions without regard for the Alliance staff officers. From the new data collected he would knit his revised tactics. Naturally, as the instructor at Lake Victoria, he taught his cadets these new tactics and effective strategies. Furthermore, that practical application was put into actual practice in mock battle and Treize drilled the cadets to think on their own about strategy, presumably... And through continual drilling, they accumulated valuable experience equal to that of real battle. It was certain he was raising excellent soldiers.

Take action as you deem appropriate.
For future soldiers.

This was the slogan Treize delivered without exception. In the future, Zechs Merquise and future Lake Victoria instructor Lucretia Noin learned the drills at this time. Those words were comprised the most helpful phrases they learned.

That point would become a huge difference between the Alliance mobile suit corps and the OZ Specials.

AC 186 SUMMER

Essentially, tactics and strategy are not set in stone; it was vital to gather, mull over, and sublimate knowledge garnered from the history of war, military theory, battlefield analysis and the like and see if all that could be put into actual practice. That was what Treize advocated in class. As such, even with mobile suit warfare being mainstream, the principle theory and rules of past battle actions must be understood in order

to continue drafting new tactical plans, he added.

A good example of this was the Ocean of Storms War, also known as the First Lunar War: a huge war fought between mobile suits.

The laborers at the Marius Plant had been the ones to start the war. Despite Van's reforms that shortened work hours, living for extended periods of time on the moon lead to great dissatisfaction. For a human, living on the moon with its one sixth of Earth's gravity can be pleasant for the first several days. However, after about a month, the stress builds up and sleep and rest lose all meaning. Although the factory head and plant manager lived with those same conditions, they did not sympathize with the laborers' horrible working conditions and did not even discuss it with the laborers. Antagonism between the management and laborers became violent and eventually, an accident at the fusion reactor lead to a strike and that became a demonstration against management. At that time, if the management had made the effort to bridge the gap between them and the laborers, the whole thing may not have escalated. However, the bumbling management requested Alliance forces stationed at the Silent Sea on the moon to take control of the situation. The Alliance, for the purpose of currying favor with the Romefeller Foundation, was quick to send three Chimeras and they suppressed the laborers demonstration with military force. This only enraged the laborers who then took ten of the new model Chimeras and attacked the Alliance's Chimeras, which were summarily defeated.

There were leaps and bounds of technical innovation. The newly manufactured Chimera that the laborers piloted were more excellent than those the Alliance soldiers had. Of course, that the laborers piloted a greater number of machines than the soldiers was also a predominant cause their success. There was also a repertoire the laborers had with their mobile suits borne of a daily use that even the professional soldiers couldn't match. As a result, the laborers came to occupy the Marius Plant and all the soldiers and management were turned out. One resistance group after another began to arrive at the Marius Plant. Especially from colonies L-1 and L-2, which were closest to the moon. The smoldering remains of the anti-Alliance highjacked shuttles and assembled [on the moon] by the dozens. They didn't need weapons; even if they arrived empty handed, they could get brand new Chimera at the plant. The plant could roll out ten mobile suits a week so it took two months for them to prepare enough suits to equal the forces of the Alliance. The problem wasn't the machines but the pilots; however, there were already some fifty terrorists and anti-Alliance soldiers and it wasn't more than a few days before there were some one hundred pilots for one hundred Chimera and the corps was completed.

The lunar space forces at the Silent Sea base were indignant about the rebellion.

"This is no laughing matter," said the commander, General Million Liddell-Hart. He was the supreme commander of the lunar space forces. "The moon will fall into the rebel's hands."

He immediately sounded out Brigadier General Kyrie at the Alliance Unification Headquarters for permission to mount a full attack with the Alliance space forces. The extent of the firepower at the lunar base consisted of the following: 40 space-worthy Chimeras, 20 space fighters; 10 lunar-surface worthy Tragos II's; a Sagittarius, a battleship so huge it should have been called a mobile fortress; and its sister ship the Centaurus. General Million believed that even if he faced an opposing force of 100 Chimeras at Marius Plant, with those two behemoth battleships, he would gain an easy victory. Those battleships were not capable of flight. Honestly, they were not battleships, nor were they even boats. They were more like giant tanks that moved like caterpillars. It was their navigation of the lunar oceans that made General Million refer to them, almost entirely out of his own personal tastes, as "battleships." Nonetheless, with its twenty-five triple barrel 260 mm gun towers; two 1300 mm beam canons; one hundred double barrel machine guns; and a total length exceeding three hundred meters, the Sagittarius and Centaurus truly were imposingly majestic to see. It is said the firepower was along the lines of fifty Chimeras and fifty Tragos II's. Sagittarius and Centaurus could both face one hundred mobile suits easily.

"Just looking at the numbers, it's plain that we will win!" That is what General Million planned Liddell-Hart believed, he was the last of the great dreadnought blockade advocates of the late AC era.

At the same time, General Million planned the construction of space fighters-- battleships equipped to both navigate space and attack there in an effort to help piracy from increasing. Until that time, while there had been space convoys a space battleship had not existed. That was due to the fact that both the Alliance and OZ decided it was not necessary. It was only natural to think that and up until that point in history, there had never once been a military engagement where space served as the battlefield. Both space worthy battleships and fleets of space worthy craft were things relegated to science fiction a dream within a dream. Nevertheless, General Million was effecting a plan to make that dream a reality. To draw up the plans for the construction of space fighters, he asked Mike Howard, resident technician instructor. The name of the vessel had already been decided: Peacemillion. Superficially, the name was intended to provoke a feeling of peace for all mankind, but the name rather had the impression of General Million trying to sell himself first and foremost. In fact, ensuing large battleships of this type were thereafter referred to as being in the "Peacemillion" class. However, it was AC 195 when the original Peacemillion was completed, six years after the Lunar Wars. Howard, who was in charge of the blueprints, was very particular about the propulsion engine and delay after delay in the plans was caused by slow progress in achieving the kinds of power necessary to carry the ship beyond the solar system. General Million didn't live to see the completion of the ship which bore his name. The Peacemillion would go on to be piloted used by Milliardo Peacecraft and Howard; and even later, as a supply and preparation aircraft carrier for the mobile suits used by the gundam pilots.

At the Alliance Unification Headquarters on Earth, they were desperate for finding some way to quell General Million's youthful vigor. Of course, the Marius Plant's being occupied by its laborers and rebels was something they wanted to take care of immediately. However, the problem like in General Million's personally. He was famous for advocating the use of big guns he would probably use the giant beam canon on the lunar battleships, blow the whole plant to kingdom come, and drive out the enemy Chimera. Even in the good old days, it was clear he was thinking of opening war on the moon.

"That," Van was the first to speak from among all the fresh faced generals, "from a strategic point of view will not lead to victory," he coolly judged. "Our primary goal is to recapture the Marius Plant. If the plant is destroyed, by enemy or ally, it will be a failure on our part."

"Mr. Van, if we had Romefeller's power, influence, and money], surely we could simply rebuild a plant or three," said Lieutenant General Venti who was sitting across from Van as per usual.

"The Foundation's budget cannot afford the luxury of being entrusted in the incompetent hand of military personnel."

"Then is there another effective means to work out this problem?"

"We shall have the Specialists head directly to the site. I wish General Liddell-Hart would refrain from opening hostilities until they arrive."

"In that time, the enemy's power will just grow stronger," said General Noventa aptly after considering the situation. The Chimeras would increase at a rate of 10 per week. For Treize to leave Lake Victoria and arrive at the moon and prepare for battle, it would take at least seven days. The enemy would be in possession of 110 brand new Chimeras. They would be overwhelmed by the sheer size of the rebel force.

"If we wait for the Specialists, the war we could win now will become impossible to win then."

"....." Van said nothing. It was classified Romefeller information, but actually, there was an important resources deposit at the Marius Plant. At one time, the place where the Marius Plant was located was called the Marius ill of the Ocean of Storms and there was a pit, through which a lava tunnel passed, called "Marius Hills Hall". There, the neo-titanium (or luna titanium) was mined for use in nearly all mobile suits' armor and drive parts. And though they had yet to successfully refine the compound metal, the wholly new "gundanium" alloy was near completion. With the gundanium alloy complete, mobile suits would become a more perfect weapon. Van looked to General Kyrie, supreme commander.

Please, protect the plant somehow. Van implored with his eyes.

General Kyrie slowly nodded.

"Allow the Alliance forces at the lunar base to Sally attack under the command of General Million Liddell-Hart."

"What?!" Van made as if to stand; he looked at Kyrie who spoke the following words with control:

"However, using the Sagittarius and Centaurus are prohibited."

"General, Liddell-Hart will be lost without them!" the usually courteous Noventa even raised his voice at Kyrie's pronouncement.

"Without the Sagittarius and Centaurus, they'll be fighting with nothing but mobile suits!"

"Just the numbers show that the enemy will have or already has superior numbers!"

"It's the same as ordering them to their deaths!"

"Mr. Van just said our goal is to recapture the Marius Plant, or have you forgotten?" General Kyrie said with a sharp glare. "If we permit the use of the giant battleships and beam canons, the plant will clearly suffer heavy damage."

"Then we prohibit the use of the beam canons only. We are not the one who will die on the battlefield, the soldiers will," said Noventa. It was only natural to think of sparing his subordinates.

That was one of his merits; the reason he garnered respect from the officers under his command.

"Hm," for a moment General Kyrie's resolve wavered at the proposed compromise. He also was a man with more humanity beyond what the average cool-headed military man possessed. "In that case, it might be worth considering."

"Just a moment!" Van couldn't help but stand up. "You must also consider General Liddell-Hart's explosively dangerous disposition!"

It was then that Alliance tactics aide Lieutenant Colonel Septum stepped into the fray. He had, several months prior, gone into service on Earth and was now seated in the end seat as an Alliance Unity Headquarters assigned advisor. Normally, this was not a position from which one could speak.

"Mr. Van, if you think tactically about this-- sending out the Centaurus and Sagittarius-- I predict the enemy will not easily leave the plant. In other words, we'd come to a deadlock and likely end up fighting a war of attrition."

"A war of attrition?" Van, too, stumbled over the word. If he stalled for time, Treize and the Specials may arrive on time. "Very well, but they cannot use the beam cannons. That is nonnegotiable," Van compromised.

As a result of the meeting, a declaration of full war was made; General Million at the lunar base was given the order to attack with the full force of the Alliance's space unit.

However, that sort of compromise and middle ground was strategically and tactically unbelievable. It was the same as saying: it's okay to take weapons with you, but don't use them. As long as Kyrie and Van held these strong positions, even General Million would not attack rashly-- but that likewise was a war of attrition. Furthermore, there is no doubt that to reinforce the goal, action, and strategy of the mission, it was clearly labeled with the name "Operation Recapture Marius Plant." Speaking from a strategic point of view, it was not strictly necessary to take out the enemy. Bloodshed was not the end-all be-all of war. Buying time with

political means like negotiations was supposedly a possibility. Compromises and concessions were not just rhetoric held in a conference room, but for the soldiers in the battlefield, they were the utmost form of annoyance.

Kyrie and Van's decision then could be called their fatal mistake. However, with six months of promoting reform, these two were suffering chronic fatigue. There was no one to blame for that but themselves.

When General Million received the orders and read that last line, he was so enraged that he nearly smashed the monitor.

Please mind both beam cannons of both the Sagittarius and Centaurus must not be used.

Million ground his teeth and his eyes were bloodshot.

"Don't use the beam cannons?! What madness is that Earth bunch on about! Don't screw with me!" He hadn't the first intention of obeying the order.

Made a decision on the battlefield, I'll fire them if it's necessary. That much ought to be obvious!

He thought to himself.

An aide worried about General Million and attempted to soothe him.

"But, General... this is an order from Headquarters."

"All units, deploy for battle! Send the mobile suit unit and the Sagittarius and Centaurus!" he ordered promptly. At the same time at Lake Victoria, Treize Khushrenada was also requested to make a sortie. Treize was perhaps the sole level-headed person on the Alliance's side. Treize seemed to address the full moon which was visible from his window; "For this sortie, we must be as prepared as possible."

I will die.

Send out the corpses.

Enemy and ally alike.

"Fighting in space is something wholly different from fighting on Earth."

The newly deployed cutting-edge suits were even more improved space-worthy Leo 'Chimeras', a.k.a. 'Gryph or Leo IV. Treize left Earth at dawn on the following morning in a large troopship and brought with him twenty five Gryphs and twenty four excellent cadets. Naturally, among these twenty four cadets were the same soldiers who had fought at Mogadishu: Zechs, Lurectia, Izumi, Solak, and Elv. For this mission, each of them had been assigned three or four cadets to command. Treize let them do as he had done. Ultimately, whether or not they had battle experience would prove to be a major difference. That could also be thought of as the responsibility of those who fought for the future soldiers.

At Marius Plant, a thin, middle aged woman by the name of Artemis Sedici held command. It was Artemis Sedici's son who, during the White Fang uprising of AC 195, was a general serving as a front line commander. Her name, the same as the goddess of the moon's, is thought to be a nickname. Despite being in her 30's, she was a knockout and in a plant full of men, she had something of a magnetic personality. To her credit, she demonstrated superb leadership skills owing to her clarity of mind. She was certainly worthy of the name Artemis.

"We have received data showing that the Alliance space forces are on the move. We shall present a united front and show them the meaning of the revolution in space."

As a strategist and knowledgeable commander both, she possessed intuition and a calmness like that of the pale moon.

"We have the power of 100 Chimera! We'll make eight units of ten suits. We'll make four flying squadrons out of our best mobile suits, surround the Marius Plant in a double square formation and form the perfect defense."

This battle formation positioned units of ten mobile suits in two square which in turn formed an eight point star. Nested within the center of that star were four units of five mobile suits that would form single square and provide the pivotal defense. This formation was called the multiplex square formation and was the most effective defense formation as it allowed for returning enemy fire from any direction. Foot soldiers from Napoleon's time also used a similar formation. If you thought of a mobile suit as a foot soldier, this was the best formation even from a tactical point of view.

In response to that, the Alliance forces made a V-shaped formation called the "Crane's Wing Pattern" and at the tip of both the left and right wings were the highly mobile space fighters in groups of ten. In the middle of the wings were units of twenty Chimera- their main fighting force- and in the apex of the V were both the Sagittarius and the Centaurus which were accompanied on the outside edge by Tragos, five to either side. This could be considered classic, but this was the natural result when Treize's tactics were applied to a large corps. For the mobile suit corps, which placed greater importance on the individual ease of movement and mobility, it was an ideal formation. On a tactical level, both formations were equal, but as far as war potential, the Alliance had a significantly better formation. A basic breakdown of the firepower on the battlefield yields 100:170. 100 rebel mobile suits to 170 Alliance mobile suits. If it did become a war of attrition, there was no doubt that the Alliance would come out on top. With the Sagittarius and Centaurus at the center, there was no way for the rebels to break through. If Million maintained the formation and proceeded to slowly and with caution, there was a possibility of victory without needing to use their main guns: the giant beam cannons.

However--

A small smile pulled at Artemis' lips.

"So, you've arrived..." she said, at the time being fully aware of the Alliance's order for Million to not use the beam cannons. That was information which she had learned that from an informant at the Alliance.

"They really aren't going to shoot the beam cannon?" asked an aide standing off to the side.

"What would you do?"

"If it was an order, then I would not fire."

Artemis scoffed, "One would think... if it were a normal commander at the helm over there, they'd have plenty of firepower to win." Her words were soft but the light in her eyes was sharp. "But they're going to fire."

"Why?"

"....." Artemis stared straight ahead, glaring at the encroaching huge corps of enemy troops.

"How do you know?"

"Because Million Liddell-Hart is not an ordinary commander."

General Liddell-Hart sat in the commander's chair on the first bridge of the Sagittarius and waited for the instant when the enemy would be within their beam cannon's firing range.

"..... this is no joke. How am I supposed to just sit here and watch the enemy's numbers snowball out of control?" In his mind, the idea that the rebels could increase their forces by ten Chimera per week was as

distasteful as a growing infestation of rats or cockroaches. He imagined their members grew even as he sat there waiting to attack. However, with all their battle preparations, the plant was not operating and the rebels had not made a single mobile suit, let alone ten.

"Don't use the big guns? Bah!"

Then, the operator announced loudly, "Main cannon charged!"

"Target locked on!"

"Confirmation from Centaurus; all preparations for firing the beam cannon are complete!"

"Sagittarius preparations to fire the beam cannon are complete!"

"No fooling around."

"The ancient Greek historian Thucydides specified three factors for starting war; they are: fear, profit, and honor. In General Million's mind, all three of these elements were all present and accounted for. The fear of the enemy endlessly increasing its numbers. The profit of completely overwhelming the rebels without any Alliance losses. The honor of gaining a reputation as the general who was victorious in a historic battle.

"There isn't anyone alive stupid enough to let a chance like this slip through his finger!" Million shouted.

"That man in an idiot," Artemis said sharply.

"Sagittarius, Centaurus, fire the cannons!"

"All Chimera, open the square!"

Both commanders gave their orders at the same time. The giant twin beam cannons on the Sagittarius and Centaurus sent out four perfectly straight beams of light towards Marius Plant. However, the one hundred Chimeras were faster and as one, they seceded from Marius Plant. On the moon, a single leap would be six times more powerful than the same leap performed on the Earth. With speed that could only be described as 'instantly,' they Chimera corps leapt into the sky, spread out left and right and withdrew backwards. The Sagittarius' and Centaurus' aim was true. The Marius Plant disappeared without a trace. Several Chimera's retreat was ruined when they got caught in the explosion and suffered light damage.

"What did I tell you? They'd shoot." Artemis had boarded the lead Chimera and jumped for joy that all her suits had moved as per their design. "All Chimera units, please proceed to phase two of our plan." The formation of the second stage was the same as their original formation: a multiplex defense in the shape of an eight point star. The difference was that, now, there was ten times the distance between each until and it wasn't the Marius Plant in the center of the star but the Alliance space troops. The rebels defensive formation changed into one that would besiege and annihilate.

At first, those on the first bridge on the Sagittarius couldn't grasp the gravity of the situation for the dazzling light of the cannon fire. General Million rose from the command chair and demanded, "STATUS!" with a shout. He wanted to confirm his victory as soon as possible. The report, however, was anything but sweet.

"All fire made a direct hit! But damage to enemy mobile suits is-"

"What is it?"

"I can't get a reading on losses to the rebels!"

"What?!"

If General Kyrie had been there, he likely would have reproached Million by declaring him a 'flaming idiot.' If Van knew, he would brand the whole mission as a complete failure.

In effect, the space forces of the Alliance were, for all intents and purposes, at a standstill. It could also be considered fatal. First, ten space fighters in the left wing had been shot down. They had faced twenty new model Chimeras which has more than twice the power. Next, twenty Alliance Chimeras (their main fighting mobile suit) had, in the face of forty enemy suits, had fallen victim to their own poor battle skills. Just as the majority of people are right handed, the left wing was an easier target than the right. The defeated Chimera escaped to the right, to the right, in front of the Sagittarius and Centaurus only to cut off those two ships. At that stage, the Alliance had lost its mobility.

"Get the hell out of my way!" General million could not help but shout. "You'll get crushed!"

The Sagittarius and Centaurus were said to be equal to one hundred mobile suits, but with the enemy spread out as they were, the Alliance couldn't lay a finger on the rebels. The most terrible thing was seeing such a huge machine suffer such a disaster against mere mobile suits. Its sister ship, the Centaurus, was hounded by over fifty enemy Chimera that concentrated their attack on its power parts and succeeded in blowing those up. It could no longer move. Million watched the spectacle with horror. It was as though they were being knocked down by a hoard of mice.

"This- this can't be."

After the umpteenth explosion on the Centaurus, the Sagittarius started evacuation procedures. In a fight against mobile suits, those lunar battleships were far too large. Perhaps for a fight between battleships, there was tactical application for General Million's Big Gun Theory.

"..... disgusting mobile suits!" That was all General Million could utter through his clenched teeth. Then, a report came in. It said that, currently, ten Alliance space fighters from the farthest point away were under attack. Million responded immediately, orienting themselves in the direction of the fierce battle and ordering the main cannons to fire.

"It will take three hundred seconds for the beams to recharge."

"If we're within range, shell them!"

"They are too far way."

Their premature retreat had invited this situation

"Do whatever it takes, just don't let them get away with this!"

Nevertheless, the Alliance fought bravely. The right wing fought for dear life, they went out destroying [the enemy] prepared to stab each other if it came to that. The battlefield at the Sea of Storms showed all signs of having become a war of attrition, yet the number of rebel Chimeras undeniably decreased. The balance of power then stood at a ratio of 80 to 75. 80 rebels to 75 Alliance. However, that is counting the Sagittarius as fifty mobile suits. In physical numbers, it was 80:25. The Alliance was at an overwhelming disadvantage. Things, however, were about to go from bad to worse. A number of soldiers were lead by Artemis to bodily infiltrate the Sagittarius at the first bridge. They were maneuvering to destroy it from the inside. That was a favorite ploy of the Resistance more than the Anti-Alliance. Artemis and her entourage immediately began pumping the ceiling full of lead. Even if you weren't million, if you were on that bridge, you surely would have been cowering for the onslaught.

"Put your hands up," Artemis said with a bewitching smile on her lips. "Anyone who tries anything funny will be shot dead, unsparingly," she said with light flashing in her eyes.

The battle at the Sea of Storms lulled and silence returned. Twenty four hours had passed during the

hostilities and the moon had orbited once around the earth.

Million Liddell-Hart surrendered; the mobile suits corps retreated, sans commander, to their base at the Silent Sea and the Sagittarius fell into the hands of the Anti-Alliance. The nearly wasted destroyed Centaurus was put to use as a holding cell for prisoners of war. It was a pitiful end for the famously stately space battleships.

Once, strategy trailblazer Carl von Clausewitz proposed in his book "On War" that the essence of war- which was an expansion of a duel- lie in part along political and diplomatic lines. To bring about victory, the victor must demand the desired order from the world. If they can commit to stable and permanent public order, then the fighting could be decidedly stopped. This had been how all wars heretofore had been concluded. It was easy for both sides to lay own arms and sit down at the table of peace if they had both suffered much bloodshed, but fail to reach that point and the fighting can only continue. The Anti-Alliance and laborers both hoped for freedom and liberation, but there was a temperature different between them. The laborers felt there was no further need to fight, but the Anti-Alliance and Resistance said they ought to thoroughly clean up any remaining Alliance troops. Discussion continued without reaching a conclusion. As soon as it became a political argument, Commander Artemis became silent. A soldier to the core, as a strategist, she only had an interest in military operations. If she had said ordered "peace negotiations" or "do-or-die resistance" they would have come to a conclusion, but in the end, she chose to say nothing. This discrepancy among the two groups indicated good fortune for the Alliance, particularly for Treize Khushrenada, who was heading for the lunar base.

Two days later, the troopship loaded with twenty five Gryphs that Treize and his men were aboard had arrived at an L-1 colony cluster broadcast station. Martial law was in effect there and the commercial shuttles were practically empty. However, people taking refuge from other lunar plants were the one exception. Nearly everyone had been evacuated from the Marius Plant over several days. At this time, just four people disembarked from the shuttle. Treize didn't look at those four people so much as study them. There was a family of three consisting of two parents [escorting] a quiet boy of about six years old. The fourth was a man in a deep hat carrying an unseemly viola case. Treize didn't take note of the group and had no reason to do so but that was the same man who murdered his grand uncle Heero Yuy and his father Ein Yuy; it was Odin Lowe. Currently, he was not working for OZ. For several years, he had been working as a free special agent. As such, he was aware of neither Treize's nor the Special's existence. Odin's trajectory would have him walk right by Treize. It felt as if his Odin's eyes were looking in his Treize's direction. Their eyes met for just a second. But they made no move to make any further inquiry his head was full of the thoughts of how to get control of the situation on the moon.... That was all he could think about.

That man looks like Heero and Ein... nay, it couldn't be, thought Odin. That thought occupied his conscious to the extent that he failed to notice the little boy crouched at his feet.

"Whoa!" Odin tripped over the boy and he lost is balance. The boy didn't fall over, but thinking he may have caused him pain, Odin apologized.

"Sorry for that, are you hurt?"

"....."

The boy was silent.

"-chan!" said the boy's mother as she came up to them.

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry."

"No trouble..." Odin said, taking off his hat and making a small bow; he headed off.

"Are you okay? Does anything hurt?" She lightly brushed his leg as if it were dirty.

"You dropped this," he said. It was a pamphlet advertising for help wanted at a lunar plant.

"Thank you, but we don't need that."

"Oh."

"Well, we won't be going to the moon anymore."

"....."

"Well, let's get going."

"Okay....."

It was a trifling of a scene It was an absurd, silly, easy scene. The exchange between mother and son reminded Treize of himself.

I haven't seen mother in a while...

Angelina was currently hospitalized in the medical section of the L-1 colony cluster.

But it doesn't look like I will be able to take the time to go see her.

With that thought, Treize sighed with deep emotion.

MC-022 NEXT WINTER

I shuddered then took off the virtual visor and stare at the viewing window of the frozen capsule. The "Aurora Princess" was almost awake. Code name: Heero Yuy. I had just seen that very same face, it was the face of that little boy.

"Defrosting complete," Master Chang said and pushed the button to open the capsule.

"Finally!" Duo said even as he hopped around and looked sharply at the capsule with extreme interest. Then, in a quiet voice, said "I'm depending on you, partner."

Father was grinning his usual face-splitting grin and approached the capsule with was gushing vapor.

"Hey, Heero."

The boy called Heero Yuy opened his clear eyes. They were the same eyes as the little boy.

"You're the same as ever," Father said nostalgically, never losing his smile.

"Heero answered unsociably in a low voice, "You, too, Duo."

His voice was an extremely cold one.